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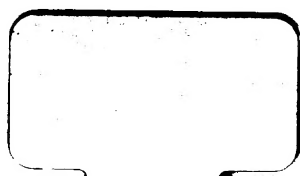
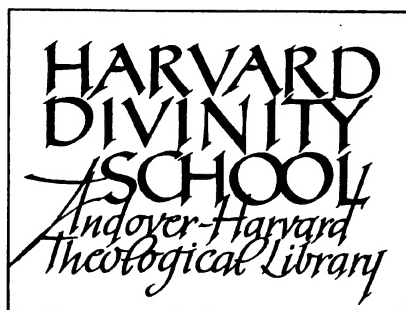
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*Earl in W. W. W.*

AN  
**APOLOGY**  
FOR  
**DR. MICHAEL SERVETUS:**  
INCLUDING  
AN ACCOUNT OF HIS LIFE, PERSECUTION,  
WRITINGS AND OPINIONS:  
Being designed to eradicate  
**BIGOTRY AND UNCHARITABLENESS:**  
AND TO PROMOTE  
*LIBERALITY OF SENTIMENT*  
AMONG CHRISTIANS.

— — — — —  
BY RICHARD WRIGHT.  
— — — — —

*One is your Master even Christ, and all ye are brethren.*

*Who art thou that judgest another.*

CHRIST,

PAUL

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## DEDICATION.

*To Calvinists in general;—to the admirers of Mr. Andrew Fuller's book, entitled the Calvinistic and Socinian systems compared as to their moral tendency, in particular;—the following pages are inscribed; as affording a display of the practical influence of Calvinism, on the temper and conduct of its first promulgators; and as a necessary sequel to the above work, being illustrative of its leading principle:*

*By their sincere wellwisher,*

**THE AUTHOR.**

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## P R E F A C E.

CALVIN has had multitudes of admirers ; poor Servetus has been held in general disrepute.— Even in the present enlightened age, there are those to be found who will not believe that the former was a persecutor, though no historic fact is more unquestionable, or that the latter was a virtuous and good character.

That Calvin persecuted Servetus to prison and to death, merely for his opinions, cannot be denied by any person who is acquainted with the ecclesiastical history of those times. Calvin's own writings prove the fact ; for he attempted to defend his conduct in bringing his opponent to the flames. Many of his disciples, those who adhere to his opinions and call themselves after him, admit that he procured the destruction of Servetus, though they attempt to palliate his conduct ; as if deliberate persecution and murder could admit of palliation.

There are those who contend that the infamous conduct of Calvin and his coadjutors, in pleading for and practising persecution, ought to be buried in oblivion ; because they cannot



be insensible that it is highly disreputable for the world to know that the founder of their party, the champion of their peculiar dogmas, was an unrelenting persecutor; yet they themselves cease not to make known, from age to age, the persecuting conduct of catholics, in former times; nor does their uncharitableness at the present time entitle them to expect that the unchristian temper and cruel deeds of their great leader should be forgotten.

Apprehending that the case of Servetus is not sufficiently known to the generality of christians, and that many have not so much as heard of it, I have been led to compose the following work, which I hope will excite a greater and more general abhorrence of bigotry and persecution. Though many accounts of Servetus have been published, I know not that any thing has appeared as an avowed apology for him, at least in our own language: hence it is presumed this volume will not be unacceptable to the candid and impartial reader.

The design of the following pages is not to stigmatize Calvin and his colleagues; but to vindicate an injured character. That Calvin was a man of learning, piety and zeal is heartily admitted. His learning, piety, and laudable exertions to promote the reformation, are de-

serving of praise ; but his bigotry and persecuting spirit call for marked censure. The evil tendency of bigotry cannot be better exemplified than by exhibiting its malignant influence on the temper and conduct of a man otherwise great and good. If the unchristian temper and conduct of the reformers be described and reprobated, it is not with a view to depreciate them ; for on many accounts we revere their memory ; but in order to render bigotry and uncharitableness odious, among whatever party of christians they may be found, and to show that the most celebrated names shall not escape uncensured if stained with the blood of the persecuted. To promote free enquiry, candor, and christian liberality ; to eradicate bigotry, party spirit, and all uncharitableness ; to rescue from undeserved censure virtuous and good men, who have been branded with the name of heretics ; are the avowed objects proposed in this work, and which have been kept in view in the composition of its several parts. It is hoped that, whatever may be found its imperfections, its tendency will be allowed to be the promotion of peace and goodwill among christians. The Lord of his infinite mercy grant that happy time may soon arrive when all the disciples of

Jesus shall love one another as brethren, and live together in peace.

Far be it from me to impute either the sentiments, or the persecuting temper, of Calvin to Calvinists of the present day, any further than they avow the former and manifest the latter. I hope the general body of christians of that denomination, however much they approve of the leading doctrines maintained by that reformer, utterly disapprove of persecution, and sincerely disavow his cruel maxim, that heretics ought to be put to death. It is however greatly to be lamented that too many persons, of that denomination, suffer their system to inspire them with a spirit of bigotry and uncharitableness. Though they would think it wrong to persecute, as Calvin did, they do not think it wrong to unchristian and withhold the right hand of fellowship from those who cannot receive certain of their dogmas. I intreat our Calvinistic brethren to consider whether the tendency of their opinions be not unfavorable to christian liberality, and whether the advocates for them have not all along manifested too much bigotry and party zeal? I wish them also to consider whether it be any honor for them to call themselves after an avowed persecutor?

Mr. Fuller has undertaken to prove that Calvinism has a superior moral tendency to Unitarianism; and hence concludes that the former is true and the latter false. In reply to his arguments Mr. Kentish has shown that the principles of Unitarianism are, in their own nature, calculated to produce better moral effects than those of Calvinism. Dr. Toulmin has replied to Mr. Fuller in a different way, he has proved, from the Acts of the Apostles, that the discourses of the first preachers of the gospel were strictly Unitarian, and contained none of the peculiar doctrines of Calvinism: yet that they produced the best moral effects. This is carrying the argument further back than Mr. Fuller seems to have intended carrying it; but it is certainly placing it on its true ground. It may be proper to define the phrase 'moral tendency.' It is certainly taken in too restricted a sense by modern Calvinists, as if it did not include the exercise of that candor, and christian charity, which embrace, with brotherly affection, all who fear God and work righteousness. Moral effects ought not to be regarded as merely comprehending a regular attendance on the public ordinances and instrumental duties of christianity, a refraining from gross sins, and an abstinence from the levities and fashionable amuse-

ments of the world ; but as including every benign temper, generous disposition, and an active course of unassuming virtue and goodness : especially the moral effects produced by christianity include the exercise of gentleness and kind treatment towards all men, unabating liberality of sentiment and conduct, and brotherly love towards all who believe and obey the gospel, however much they may differ from us in opinion. If this definition be just, Calvinism has sadly failed of producing the moral effects which characterize the religion of Jesus ; for, it is to be feared, there are but few Calvinists who would, without scruple, receive and treat, in all respects, as their christian brethren, those christians who reject, though from the sincerest regard to truth, the peculiarities of their system. The moral effects of the gospel certainly do not include austerity of manners, that self-righteous disposition which produces a contempt of others, a censorious condemning spirit, illiberality of sentiment, and uncandid and unkind treatment of those who differ from us : yet these things have frequently been associated with the boasted moral effects of Calvinism. Unitarians have no need to fear the agitation of the question, whether they or their opponents be most conspicuous for the exercise of candor and benevo-

lence, and the general spirit of christianity? But there seems something invidious in this mode of arguing, therefore I desist from it; yet it is the mode of deciding on the truth or falsehood of religious systems which some Calvinists are fond of adopting.

Could we bring ourselves to adopt the uncandid spirit and mode of reasoning adopted by our opponents, we might contend that the tendency of Calvinism is morally bad, that it leads to persecution, cruelty and murder, and prove it from the conduct of Calvin and his associates; but we are willing to impute their persecuting temper and conduct, not to their particular system, nor to vicious principles generated by their peculiar doctrines, but to the ignorance and barbarous temper of the age in which they lived; and we only wish that Calvinists would exercise a small degree of the same candor when prying into the defects of Unitarians. If it be still contended that the truth of religious systems is to be determined by the temper and conduct of those who adopt them, we must insist that Calvinism ought to be judged of by the spirit and conduct of Calvin, from whom it derived its name. We find the moral tendency of christianity fully exemplified in the temper and conduct of Jesus and his apostles, the

founders of that divine system. Our opponents contend that the truth or falsehood of opposite systems, under the christian name, is to be determined by their influence on those who profess them, by the moral effects they produce. Is it unfair then to say, using the *argumentum ad hominem*, that Calvinism is to be judged of by the spirit and conduct of John Calvin, and that its tendency is to produce bigotry, persecution and murder: that consequently it is false? I write thus barely to show the fallacy of Mr. Fuller's mode of deciding on particular religious systems. The following pages will furnish a sufficient specimen of the temper and conduct of the reformer of Geneva.

To avoid the trouble of frequent reference, I will give the reader an account, in the outset, of the sources from which I have drawn my information respecting Servetus, and the authorities on which the facts I have narrated, in the historic part of this work, are founded.

*The history of Servetus in the Memoirs of literature, written by M. DE LA ROCHE, and afterwards augmented by him, and translated into French, in his Bibliotheque Angloise. tom. ii. part i. article vii.*



*Historia Reformationis Polonicæ Authore STANISLAO LUBIENJECIO.*

*An impartial History of Michael Sercretus.—*  
*Printed for AARON WARD, at the King's*  
*Arms, in Little Britain. 1724.* [From this  
History I have made long extracts in the  
Chapter on the Persecution of Servetus.]

DR. BENSON'S *Essays.*

ROBINSON'S *Ecclesiastical Researches.*

*The Life of Servetus,* by JACQUES GEORGE de  
CHAUFFPIE.

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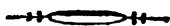
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## CHAPTER I.

### PRELIMINARY OBSERVATIONS,

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*2. That some of the wisest and best of men have been charged with heretical pravity. Sect.*

*3. The difficulty of obtaining a full and impartial account of Doctor Servetus. Sect. 4. A glance at the state of the christian world down to the period of Servetus' sufferings.*

THAT the reader may be prepared to attend with impartiality to the case of Servetus, it is thought necessary to present him with some previous remarks. It is a question of great and awful import, have one party of christians a right to deprive others of liberty and life, merely because they deem their opinions erroneous and heretical? On the answer which this question receives, the condemnation or justification of the Doctor's persecutors

entirely depends. If it be answered in the negative, nothing can justify their conduct. This question will be fully discussed in the course of this work; in the mean time, it is thought best to submit to consideration a few general observations on persecutors and persecution. To traduce the character of virtuous and good men, is a great injury to them, and to society. What can be more valuable among men than a good name? 'it is like precious ointment:' and there is nothing a wise man would not do to preserve it, short of acting wrong; highly as he may value his reputation, it would be foolish and wicked to preserve it at the expense of a good conscience. To violate the reputation of another is an injury to society, as it weakens the tie which unites him to them, diminishes their sense of his worth, and has a tendency to destroy his usefulness. To fix the brand of heresy upon a wise and good man, is, in the view of multitudes, to blast his reputation: hence it is judged proper to explain this circumstance, that mankind may be disabused on a point which has materially affected the reputation of many great men. Perhaps, the majority of mankind still judge of those with whom they have not been previously acquainted, merely by common report and popular clamor: this seems to make it necessary they

should be apprized of the difficulties which attend the forming an accurate judgment of those who have been long calumniated. As characters take their cast, in a great measure from the age and circumstances in which they live, it is presumed that a bare glance at the state of the christian world, down to the period when our martyr suffered, will assist the reader in forming an impartial judgment of him and of his persecutors. It is also presumed, that the investigation of these matters is of considerable importance, irrespective of the particular case of Servetus.

The reader is intreated to divest himself as much as possible of prejudice, and all party consideration, to place himself, in imagination, in the situation of the persecuted man, and then say what he should think of being treated as he was. One of the greatest of all God's commandments is, *Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself*. If we fully obey this command, we shall be as tender of the reputation of others as we are of our own, and as reluctant to take away their lives or liberty, as we are to destroy ourselves or our own liberty. Without regarding who were the actors, let the merits of the case, on both sides, be fully and impartially examined.

## SECTION I.

### *Of Persecutors and Persecution.*

In former times, persecution, the offspring of superstition and bigotry, prevailed like an epidemical disease, in the christian world. All parties were either infected with its spirit, or became its victims. By it the wisest and best of men were cut off, the rights and liberties of christians destroyed, and the kingdom of antichrist established and supported. It long continued the scandal and the curse of the nominal church. The times are happily changed, a more liberal spirit prevails among christians of different parties, by wise and tolerant laws the demon of persecution is chained; still the monster is not destroyed; though under such powerful restraints, he shows by the fierceness of his temper, and his censorious language, what he would be at could he regain his liberty.

Every one who values his liberty as a man, and regards his rights and privileges as a christian, should inculcate an abhorrence of bigotry and persecution. He should, with a fearless tone, lift up his voice against the bigot and the persecutor, saying 'Who art thou, O man, the



child of ignorance and frailty, that thou shouldst arrogate to thyself the right of setting in judgment upon thy fellows, and of censuring and condemning them merely for their opinions? Is it not enough that thou hast the liberty of judging and acting for thyself, without molestation; canst thou not be contented unless allowed to judge for thy brethren also?'

'Who gave thee dominion over the faith of others? Who made thee a judge and ruler in matters which relate solely to God and conscience? Have not thy neighbours the same sources of information, the same right of judging for themselves as thou hast? Art thou alone possessed of reason and understanding? Was wisdom born, or will it die, with thee? Show the proofs of thy mental superiority, the credentials of thy infallibility, the evidences of thy authority, before thou assumest the prerogative of judging and censuring others for their religious faith and practice.'

He who cannot hear his own opinions opposed, and his assertions contradicted, without being angry, who censures and condemns those who differ from him, shows himself a bigot. He who attempts to injure another in his reputation, person, or property, who would deprive him of

any privilege, or advantage, merely on account of his opinions, is a persecutor. He who hates another, or treats him with unkindness, because he differs from him in religious matters, manifests a persecuting spirit.

For the followers of the meek and lowly Jesus, who, with his dying breath, prayed for his persecutors and murderers, to turn persecutors, is a flat contradiction to the character they assume, a scandal to their holy profession, and a forfeiture of their relation to him as disciples. A persecuting christian is a solecism. We might as well talk of an honest thief, a virtuous debauchee, or a liberal covetous man, as of a real christian who is a persecutor and a murderer. Nothing can be more evident than that all persecutors fall below the christian standard, as erected by Jesus and his apostles.

It is much to be lamented that the spirit of persecution has so long and so generally prevailed among the professors of the gospel.— Their uncharitableness, and criminal treatment of each other, has greatly scandalized christianity, destroyed the peace of the church and promoted infidelity. It is not by drawing a veil over these things, by disguising matters and palliating the crimes of professed christians, we do honor to divine revelation and promote its

cause. The scriptures give a detail of the crimes, as well as the virtues, of the most celebrated characters. Not by dissimulation, and the suppression of facts; but by a fair statement of things as they are, and an impartial regard to truth, the cause of truth and righteousness is promoted. The detestable spirit of bigotry and persecution, which influenced protestants, as well as papists, in former times, and the horrid cruelties they committed in the awful name of the God of love, should be generally made known, as a warning to christians in the present day. An acquaintance with these things will lead us more fully to discover the improvement which has been made in liberality of sentiment since the æra of the reformation, teach us more highly to appreciate the advantages we enjoy in the present more enlightened and liberal age, and show the impropriety of imputing to modern catholics the crimes of their forefathers, seeing protestants also were once persecutors. By proclaiming our detestation of bigotry and persecution, among whatever party of christians they are found, or by whatever great names sanctioned, we shall show our impartiality, free ourselves from a stain which has long defiled the church, help to remove a stumbling block out

of the way of unbelievers, and bear our testimony against the spirit of antichrist.

Religion is not accountable for the crimes committed in its sacred name, seeing it discountsenances and condemns them. Christianity, as it originated with the God of infinite love and mercy, as it was introduced by his most glorious messenger, the meek and merciful Jesus, and promulgated by his holy apostles, is a religion of love, it breathes nothing but peace on earth and goodwill to men, its tendency and design is to regenerate the world, to unite mankind in one family, by the bonds of mutual love, and to lead them to the habitual practice of every thing that is virtuous and excellent: but as perverted by ignorance, corrupted by evil passions, prostituted to the vile purposes of avarice and ambition, a long catalogue of crimes and calamities have been associated with it. Yes, a religion which begins with humility, whose essence is love, and its object universal peace and happiness, has been so grossly perverted as to become the stalking horse of pride, the engine of tyranny, and the pretext for committing the most horrid cruelties. Nothing but the grossest perversion could ever make room for the practice of persecution, or suffer its spirit to arise among christians. The perversion of so godlike a system

to base and wicked purposes is the foulest stain and deepest depravity of human nature.

The disciples of Jesus were for a long time persecuted. Then they were humble, peaceful and gentle towards all men: they bore their sufferings with patience and magnanimity, and pure religion flourished under their fostering hand. It was not till they rose to power, till pride and luxury appeared among them, till they set up for masters over their brethren, in direct opposition to the spirit and precepts of Christ, that they began to persecute each other. If the professed followers of Jesus were like their great master, if, imbued with his spirit, guided by his precepts, they walked in his steps, bigotry, party spirit, and persecution, would have no existence among them. Had the reformer of Geneva uniformly regarded Christ as his example, he could not have aroused the demon of persecution, and goaded him on to the destruction of his christian brother; nor could he have become the advocate of the infamous practice of burning men for their opinions.

The study of history is no doubt highly important; but the virtuous man must be filled with painful sensations, while perusing the sad details which historians give of crimes and calamities. He cannot refrain from weeping in

secret places over the ignorance, folly, and wickedness of men : but most of all his heart is wrung with anguish while he views religion transformed into a monster, decorated with the filthy trappings of superstition, breathing anathemas and death, the source of all consolation made an engine of destruction, and contemplates the professed disciples of a master who went about doing good, biting and devouring each other. Alas ! what shocking scenes do the pages of ecclesiastical history unfold ! If the history of the world abounds with details of rapine and violence, of wars, murders and massacres, the history of the church equally abounds with disgusting scenes of intrigue, intolerance and persecution. The pages of the latter, like those of the former, are besmeared with blood, and exhibit facts which stamp infamy on those who have been adhered to as great leaders among christians.

The acts of cruelty and murder which have been perpetrated in support of reputed orthodoxy are the more criminal because perpetrated under the pretence of glorifying the God of mercy, of promoting the cause of him who came not to destroy men's lives but to save them, and of doing honor and giving support to a religion, the grand characteristic of which is love,

which places charity at the head of all its virtues and excellencies. If any thing can add unusual aggravation to guilt, increase the natural odiousness of vice, and render cruelty superlatively cruel, it must be the attempting to sanction vice with the sacred name of religion, and the pretending that cruelty is exercised in the name and for the honor of the God of mercy.

A veil has too frequently been drawn by ecclesiastical writers over the crimes committed against christian liberty and the rights of conscience. Sometimes such outrages on the principles of justice and christianity, even when attended with cruelty and murder, have been mistaken for acts of piety and virtue. The persecuted were first branded with the name of heretics, then murdered, and, to complete the injury done them, afterwards exhibited in the historic page as enemies to God and religion. So common has it been to call evil, good, and good, evil. It is not difficult to account for this.—The persecutors were the predominant party, the persecuted, a despised few. The former thought their own faith and practice to be right, that by destroying the latter they did God service, and men of their own party gave an account of these transactions. In the estimation



of such writers the persecutors were saints, and the persecuted monsters. This statement, though it will not hold universally, will be found true in numerous instances, and is peculiarly applicable to the case of Dr. Servetus. When the persecuted quickly after became the preponderating party the case was different. The crimes of the persecutors were blazoned abroad, in all their enormity, though, alas! the party who published too frequently imitated them. When the persecutors were successful, and maintained their power, it was left for posterity, sometimes at a remote distance of time, to expose, in their true colors, their nefarious and bloody deeds.

This work is designed to place before the reader a shocking scene of persecution, in connexion with a view of the life and opinions of the worthy person who was the object of it. This scene cannot be laid open without exposing the unchristian spirit, and barbarous conduct of a great reformer; but it is presumed that this is no sufficient reason for the suppression of interesting facts. Every principle of justice should stimulate us to vindicate the character of an innocent man, who fell a victim to the merciless rage of bigotry. Persecutors of all parties cannot be too generally execrated. I know not how the baneful influence of bigotry and a

persecuting spirit can be better shown than by exhibiting their effects, as exemplified in the temper and conduct of a man otherwise great and venerable. Why should the conduct of popish persecutors be held up to execration, their names be loaded with infamy, their cruel deeds be proclaimed from age to age, and a veil be drawn over the conduct of protestant persecutors, their religious murders be passed over in silence, and their names be embalmed in the incense of praise? Why should one party of christians, when put to death for following the dictates of their consciences, be honored with the venerable name of martyrs, and men of another party, when they suffer death for the same cause, be only heard of under the odious appellation of heretics? Nothing but prejudice and party spirit can have tolerated such invidious and unjust distinctions.

Persecution on account of religion is always unjust. It is totally unauthorized by Jesus Christ, and violates the first principles of morality. The question is not whether the opinions of the persecuted be true or false; allow them to be absolutely false, it will not follow that those who believe and propagate them ought to be persecuted. Every man has a natural right to judge for himself, to express his own opinions,

mouths, they acted, in some instances, as if they thought themselves infallible.

Several other things were taken for granted, by the persecutors of former times, which are incapable of proof. They took for granted that an erroneous opinion is heresy, that heresy is a capital crime, and that it ought to be punished by the magistrate. These notions long passed as unquestionable. They were founded in ignorance and pride, and produced intellectual bondage and murder. Allowing that they could be infallibly certain that those who differed from them were in error, it would by no means follow that such error constituted them heretics, or that a mere error in opinion is a moral evil. In the New Testament the word heresy, when used in a bad sense, implies something that is evidently contrary to the spirit and precepts of the gospel: consequently mere error in opinion is not heresy. Wrong opinions are not injurious any further than they have a bad moral influence. Those opinions which lead men to hate, persecute, and destroy others are certainly wrong; for they produce wrong actions, their tendency is murderous. Even granting that it could be proved that their opponents were real heretics, it by no means follows that they were guilty of any crime of which human laws should

take cognizance, or which any civil magistrate had a right to punish. To suppose it is to contradict the plain assertion of Christ, that he is the only master of christians. It is not necessary a man should be what others deem sound in the faith in order to his being a good member of society: the belief of any particular creed, or the observance of any particular ritual cannot be essential to this. Religious tests are not necessary to the well being of the community. A man may be a catholic or a protestant, a christian or a mahomedan, a jew or a pagan, without forfeiting the protection of the laws, or any of the privileges of civil Society. Nothing but overt acts, inconsistent with the peace and welfare of society, ought to be punishable by the magistrate.

The glory of the reformation was tarnished, and its progress interrupted, by the persecuting temper of some of the reformers. So far as bigotry and a persecuting spirit remain the revival of pure and primitive christianity is necessarily obstructed. That every such obstruction to the progress of the gospel may be removed it is necessary that wherever these evils are found they be exposed and exploded. This is necessary to the effecting more union among

christians, and the removing, as much as possible, every stumbling block out of the way of unbelievers.

A late excellent writer says, 'One thing which has increased the number of *infidels*, has been the *christians* making use of so many *pious frauds*, and winking hard at the faults of persons of their own way; while they have opened their eyes wide upon the mistakes and foibles of those of a different party.'

'If ever we would defend our *common christianity* effectually, and answer the *anti-revelationists* to any good purpose, we must give up those *principles* and *practices* which cannot be fairly defended, and hold fast those alone which may be supported by truth and evidence.'

'It is now above 200 years since the commencement of *the reformation*. Is it not, then, a shame and a reproach to *protestants* of all denominations, that there should yet be among them any pretences to infallibility; or any remains of bigotry and *persecution*; the very worst part of popery? That the free, noble and generous spirit of *benevolence* and *liberty* has not yet had an universal spread; and rooted out *the spirit of persecution and uncharitableness*, in all the kinds and degrees thereof? If such a spirit and temper were diffused among us and prevailed

the more sober and considerate enemies of *revelation* would be more ready to hearken to what we have to say. And as to the body of them, who have never read the *Bible* through, with any tolerable care and attention; who wish *christianity* may be false, because it is convenient for them it should be so; inasmuch as it condemns their vices, and threatens them with a righteous judgment to come, and a terrible hereafter; when we had gained the more virtuous and judicious, such loose and abandoned persons, would either be put out of countenance, as having nothing plausible to say in their own vindication; or they would show mankind, *That they are against revelation, purely because revelation is against them.*

‘At a time when *all religion* is so boldly struck at, we ought not to load religion with the pretended power and authority of any man, or number of men. We ought to content ourselves with being *christians*, and not list ourselves into any *party*, and glory in the name of particular *heads* and *leaders*. *One alone is our master*, our head and our Lord, viz. *Jesus Christ*; and we should glory in *his name* only: we should take our *religion* from his word, and make that the *sole standard*. Then should we

bring about the *most glorious reformation indeed!* not by the burning of *heretics*, (i. e. of persons who differ from us, no more than we differ from them) not by hunting down those we cannot convince; but by the force of evidence, and in the spirit of love and meekness; by kind treatment, invincible arguments, and inoffensive, holy and exemplary lives. Then would *the glorious spirit of liberty and charity* flow in every vein, and beat in every pulse; the *most godlike benevolence* warm every heart, and influence every action. Then would *the salvation of God be nigh unto them that fear him, and glory dwell in our land! mercy and truth would meet together; righteousness and peace would embrace each other! Truth would spring out of the earth, and righteousness look down from heaven.*'

'This is a *reformation* devoutly to be wished for, by every humane and virtuous man; *A spectacle, which God might look down upon with pleasure!* A reformation which would bring glory to God on high, peace on earth, and the most extensive benevolence among men!'

Alas! how far is such a glorious reformation from being effected! When shall the happy time arrive when all prejudice and bigotry shall die away; when party spirit, discord and animosity shall be heard of no more among chris-

\* Dr. Benson's Tracts, 3rd. Edition, p. 207—209.

tians; when every mind shall be open to receive the truth as it is in Jesus, and every heart be filled with love to God and man? When shall primitive christianity, in all its original purity and native simplicity become universal? When shall it be that all the professors of the gospel shall convince unbelievers, by their heavenly tempers and holy lives, that there is something truly divine in the religion they profess? God of infinite love and mercy, carry thy gracious designs into effect, fulfil thy precious promises, let the sure words of prophecy be accomplished, that all the earth may be filled with thy glory, the people become all righteous, and live together in peace. We are waiting for thy salvation O LORD.

## SECTION II.

*That some of the wisest and best of men have been charged with heretical pravity.*

Ecclesiastical writers have too frequently either assumed the seat of judgment, and arrogantly taken upon themselves to decide on the opinions and state of their fellow christians, or suffered their judgment to be swayed, and their



pens to be guided, by popular prejudices: and have diminished the value of their writings, by partial statements and the misapplication of terms. With such men whatever opinions have preponderated, and been sanctioned by authority, at the time they wrote, have been orthodox, and every thing opposed to them, heresy.— Among the dissonant parties of christians, those who have been the most popular, and whose system has obtained general countenance, whether right or wrong, have been with them the true church, and all the rest heretics. This has been productive of very injurious effects. The memory of some of the wisest and best of men has been insulted, not only the due meed of praise withholden from them, but undeserved opprobrium associated with their names, merely because they happened to be the minority, and the majority, not contented with outvoting them, having the strong arm of power on their side, were unjust and cruel enough to defame and persecute them. Many readers, who judge of things by the representation such writers give, have been led to conclude that the opinions maintained by such reputed heretics are false and dangerous. Thus the mistakes and prejudices of the former times of ignorance have been perpetuated, the empire of error and superstition

upheld, unbiassed enquiry after truth prevented, and a number of bugbears placed in the road to improvement, to deter the weak and timid from proceeding in it.

The misapplication of the terms orthodoxy and heresy have banefully operated, by keeping alive prejudice, bigotry and party spirit, in producing uncharitableness and disaffection in the family of Christ.

Christians, of all parties, should studiously promote liberality of sentiment, and the love of the brethren; for love to each other is the distinguishing mark of the disciples of Jesus, and charity is the bond of perfectness. To stigmatize virtuous and good men with the name of heretics, violates the precepts of Christ, breaks the royal law of love, exposes religion to contempt, and is a gross misapplication of language: yet this has long been the practice of many christians. Men of unquestionable virtue and integrity have been basely calumniated with the charge of heresy, and the stigma on their names repeated by a succession of writers.—Persons of little information, when they read or hear of heretics, associate with the word the idea of something opposite to the gospel, something wicked and profane; hence they conclude

those to whom the opprobrious name is given to be bad characters, and that it is dangerous to pay any attention to their opinions and reasonings. It is high time for the world to be disabused as to the arbitrary, invidious and unjust use made of the terms heretic and heresy. The unlearned ought to be informed that, at one time or other, the charge of heresy has been brought against christians of all parties, generally against those who have differed from the prevailing party, and frequently against the best of men. All that can safely be concluded from the common application of the term heretic is, that those to whom it is applied are the minority, that their opinions are unpopular, and that their opponents are uncharitable enough to give them a bad name. It was not for any immoral conduct, for any violation of the laws of either God or man, that Dr. Servetus was charged with heresy and burnt to death; but simply for his religious opinions. His being persecuted and slain, merely on this account, involves no degradation of character in the eyes of impartial men, implies no criminality in the sufferer, and ought to leave no stain on his name. A distinction ought ever to be made between reputed heresy and real culpability. Before what are called heretical opinions can be proved

criminal it should be shown that it is criminal for men to judge for themselves and express their own thoughts on religious subjects.

The reputed orthodox Jews charged the great apostle of the gentiles with heresy, on account of his professing and promulgating the gospel. He confessed that after the way which they called heresy so worshipped he the God of his fathers. Acts 24, 14. The Jews at Rome said to him, *As concerning this accusation, heresy, the heresy of christianity, we know that every where it is spoken against.* After finding the great apostle Paul among reputed heretics, and christianity itself among reputed heresies, we need not wonder at finding the former term applied to good men, and the latter to doctrines of truth. Nor can any reputed orthodox christians be more confident of the truth of their opinions, than the reputed orthodox Jews were of the truth of theirs, in the days of Christ and his apostles. Such confidence is no sufficient ground to despise and condemn others.

A bare glance at history, and a reference to some few circumstances which have occurred in modern times, will be sufficient to establish the truth of the position which stands at the head of this section.

The late Mr. R. Robinson observes that there existed a large body of Dissenters, from the first establishment of the church in the fourth, down to the thirteenth century. 'They were' says he 'named Messalians and Euchites, the one a hebrew, the other a greek name, and both signifying a people that pray, for they placed religion not in speculation, but in devotion and piety. Euchite among the greeks was a general name for a dissenter, as Waldensian was in the Latin church, and as Nonconformist is in England.' The Euchites or Dissenters, it seems, were divided into many branches, and are described in ecclesiastical history under various names, as particular circumstances, at different times, and in different countries, occasioned them to be denominated. The reputed orthodox party branded them all with the name of heretics. Either through mistake or design they misrepresented their doctrines. Blinded by prejudice and filled with animosity they blackened their characters. Determined at all events to support their own system they frequently excited princes to persecute them.—Such was the conduct, for a series of ages, of those who voted themselves the true church, and made their own dogmas identical with the gospel, towards their dissenting brethren, whom

they denominated heretics, merely because they would not receive their opinions as articles of faith, and bow to their authority in matters of religion.

The same writer says of the Euchites, "They are generally taxed with great crimes: but is it credible that vicious characters could do what they did, or suffer what they suffered? Why were they not punished for these crimes, and not burnt for their opinions? The truth is, they would not be governed in religion by any thing except their own convictions." Dr. Mosheim says that 'The accounts which have been given of them, are not in all respects to be depended upon: and there are several circumstances which render it extremely probable, that many persons of eminent piety, and zeal for genuine christianity, were confounded by the Greeks with these enthusiasts, and ranked in the list of heretics, merely on account of their opposing the vicious practices, and the insolent tyranny of the priesthood, and their treating with derision that motley spectacle of superstition that was supported by public authority.'

For several ages the church was divided into two great parties, who violently opposed each other. The Arians and Trinitarians. These alternately persecuted and were persecuted.

The doctrines of each were alternately deemed the true faith and heresy ; but the trinitarian party ultimately prevailed, and the Arians became the heretics of ecclesiastical history. It should however be remembered that had arianism finally triumphed, and been permanently adopted by the hierarchial church, the case would have been reversed, the Arians would have been the true believers, and the Trinitarians the heretics. Arius and Athanasius seem both to have been men of learning, piety and zeal ; but their want of moderation and christian charity much disturbed the peace of the church, and did great injury to religion. The character of the former has no doubt been blackened by his successful enemies, and we have no accounts of him but what have passed through their hands : his doctrines they would be likely to misrepresent after they had destroyed his writings. Had it not been for the support trinitarianism derived from the patronage of successive emperors, and its advancing under the banners of the victorious armies of Justinian, by which the supporters of arianism were crushed, it is possible Arius might have been the reputed saint, and Athanasius the reputed heretic, to this day. It ought never to be forgotten that to worldly power reputed orthodoxy

was indebted for the pre-eminence it attained in the world.

Paul of Samosata was bishop of the church at Antioch, in the third century. He was an eloquent and popular preacher. His popularity probably excited envy. Incapable of proving him guilty of any crime, some of the neighbouring bishops, because his opinions did not happen to coincide with their own, accused him of heresy, and, by calling in the assistance of a pagan emperor, obtained his removal from the house in which he taught the people christianity. They had not the power of burning him. The manner in which he addressed one of his opponents, Dionysius of Alexandria, shows that he was influenced by the spirit of the gospel. He said, ' You call me crooked serpent, This does not affect me. I honor you for your age, and for your sufferings for Christ: and every body esteems you for your wisdom and prudence. Do not complain of my obscurity. I will tell you what I mean in the language of scripture without any mixture of my own.'

Pelagius, a native of Great Britain, flourished early in the fifth century. His adversaries acknowledged that he lived devoutly from his youth, that he was a man of acute wit, great eloquence, and well esteemed by many for his



piety. He is said to have maintained 'That man by the exertion of his free will, and his own natural powers alone, is capable of working out his own salvation; that grace is given in proportion to the desire of attaining it; that man is not guilty of the sin of Adam, but that guilt and virtue are merely personal, and that children who die before baptism are not in a state of damnation.' For asserting these opinions he was charged with heresy, anathematized, and by a solemn edict banished Rome.

In those days men were charged with heresy on the most trivial grounds. The least deviation from the established creeds, the slightest opposition to the reigning bishops, constituted a man a heretic, and exposed him to the anathemas of the church. An instance or two of this shall be stated.

The Semipelagians, according to Dr. Dupin, maintained 'That man by the mere force of nature might desire to do good, and that God seconded that good will by his assistance, which depended upon liberty and was given to all men.' For this innocent and rational opinion they were denominated heretics.

Nestorius, bishop of Constantinople, maintained that the Virgin Mary ought not to be called the mother of God. He had many fol-

lowers. A number of the clergy adopted the same opinion. For this opinion, which all protestants admit to be true, after synods and councils had met to deliberate, and much bustle and intrigue, Nestorius was condemned and his doctrine anathematized. Thus merely for an opinion, which one would think common sense would lead every man to approve, i. e. that God Almighty was not the son of a woman, the good man was degraded from his office as a bishop, and, with his adherents, placed in the list of heretics.

In the seventh century a council was held at Rome, by Pope Martin I. against what were called Monothelites, i. e. those who taught there was but one will in Jesus Christ. After repeated meetings the council determined in favor of two wills in the one person of Christ, and anathematized a number of bishops for asserting the contrary, with all who then were, or hereafter should be, of that opinion.

These few specimens are sufficient to show on what slight grounds men have been branded with the name of heretics: and they are sad proofs of the ignorance, arrogance, presumption and unchristian spirit which pervaded the church in former times. Happy would it be if every vestige of such antichristian spirit and

conduct was eradicated among all parties of christians.

‘It was in the third century’ says the late Mr. R. Robinson ‘when the first system of discipline was going a great pace over from the people into the second, the sacerdotal system, that a great separation took place at Rome, and multitudes bore a noble testimony against the prevailing corruption. At Rome these dissenters were called Novations, from Novatus, one of the chief managers of the affair. They called themselves Puritans, or, as the Greeks translated the word, Cathari; and they intended by the name to signify the fact, that they separated from the rest because their morals were impure. It was precisely such a case as that of the Donatists in Africa. There was no dispute about doctrines: but the whole was summed up in one word, virtue.’ Yet these people though they separated from the worldly church merely on account of its impure state, have been denominated schismatics and troublers of the church. The reason they had for quitting the nominal church is abundantly evident from the description Mosheim gives of its corrupt state. He says ‘The most respectable writers of that age have put it out of the power of an historian to spread a veil over the enormities of ecclesiastical

rulers. By a train of vices they were sunk in luxury and voluptuousness, puffed up with vanity, arrogance, and ambition, possessed with a spirit of contention and discord, and addicted to many other vices. The bishop assumed a princely authority, was exalted above his equals, and had a throne surrounded by ministers. Presbyters followed their example, neglected their duty, and abandoned themselves to the indolence and delicacy of an effeminate and luxurious life. Deacons imitated their superiors, and the effects of a corrupt ambition were spread through every rank of the sacred order. Yet to dissent from these corrupt professors of the gospel subjected a man to the charge of heresy or schism.

The reformation rescued many names from undeserved obloquy and contempt, and enrolled them in the noble army of martyrs, who, but for that important event, had still been reckoned among perverse and obstinate heretics: and it is hoped the day will soon come when many others who have labored and suffered in the cause of christian truth and liberty, will have equal justice done them.

Albigenses and Waldenses, though names long and generally execrated, as having every

thing associated with them that is heretical and bad, cannot now be heard without the idea of firm adherents to and martyrs in the cause of truth, virtue and liberty, presenting itself to the mind. All protestants will acknowledge that the people who bore those names were the best men that lived during the dark ages of superstition. Yet long did they labor under the stigma of heretical pravity, long had they to suffer the cruel lash of persecution; and in Dr. Dupin's history of the church they are still numbered with heretics.

John Wickliff, though now only heard of, among protestants, as an eminent servant of Jesus Christ, and a great reformer, had his books condemned and cast into the fire: kings, popes, and councils held in various places, vented anathemas against him and his doctrine. The council of Constance condemned him with this sentence, 'That *John Wickliff* being a notorious heretic, and obstinate, and dying in his heresy, his body and bones, if they may be discerned from the bodies of other faithful people, should be taken up out of the ground, and thrown away far from the burial of the church.' Forty one years after his burial, the tomb of this venerable person was rifled, his bones burnt, and cast into a neighbouring brook.

John Huss and Jerome of Prague, though justly regarded by protestants as faithful martyrs, were burnt for heresy, and the generality of christians then, and for many years after, supposed them justly punished: in that light would they have still been thought of had not the reformation changed men's ideas. Wickliffites and Hussites are still among Dr. Dupin's heretics.

At the time of the reformation, and long since, by popish writers, Luther, Calvin, and the rest of the reformers, were charged with heresy, and treated as heretics. Had the popish party succeeded in their attempts to quash the reformation, extirpate the reformers, and render popery universal and permanent, we should have heard of those great men, whose praise is in all the churches, only as vile heretics and blasphemers. Had the protestant cause failed there had been no protestant martyrs; those who now bear that honorable name would have been rendered infamous by being enrolled in the list of heretics. The agents of a successful reformation, if they perish in effecting it, are all saints and martyrs. Those who are active in promoting a reformation that fails, are heretics, miscreants, enemies to Christ and

religion : if they perish in the attempt the cruel death inflicted on them is deemed a just punishment. Luther and Calvin attempted a reformation, they succeeded, and are spoken of as saints and great reformers. Servetus also attempted a reformation of what he thought a corruption of the christian doctrine, he was for carrying reform further than Luther and Calvin had carried it; had he succeeded he too had been acknowledged a saint and reformer; but as he failed, and fell a martyr to the cause, his name has been execrated, and he has continued to be spoken of as a heretic and blasphemer. Cranmer and his associates were saints and martyrs, but those they persecuted, and whose death they promoted, were not martyrs, for their opinions were deemed heretical : and so were those of Cranmer and his associates by the church of Rome. Thus, by ignorance, prejudice, and a perversion of language, things are misrepresented, and mankind imposed on from age to age.

The English Puritans, or Nonconformists, were another set of reformers : and though their memory is justly respected, and their praise continues in the churches, they did not escape the lash of bigotry, when for conscience sake they withdrew from the national church, and

preached the word of God in unauthorized places. They renounced worldly honors and emoluments, took joyfully the spoiling of their goods, many of them submitted to bonds and imprisonment, for the sake of a good conscience, by which they proved themselves the best men of their day, still the cry of heresy and schism pursued them.

It has fallen to the lot of Unitarians, commonly called Arians and Socinians, to labor under the opprobrium of heretical pravity longer than any other party of christians. They were charged with heresy, and bitterly persecuted by the successful reformers. To the present day, by many of their reputed orthodox brethren, their name is cast out as evil. Yet they have not had less learning, virtue and piety among them, in proportion to their numbers, than any other denomination of christians. Some of the most respectable of their opponents have given them credit for great learning, uncommon abilities, a high degree of the christian temper, a strictly virtuous conduct, and firm attachment to what they believe to be the truth, even when they have been representing their opinions as false and dangerous. This praise they have justly deserved. Their literary labors,



and theological writings are an unequivocal proof of their learning, abilities and industry. The style and manner in which they have written, and their treatment of those who differ from them, fully evince the goodness of their spirit. Their virtue and benevolence, unstained by superstition, unmingled with bigotry and moroseness, have long refuted the ill-natured reflections of their enemies. Their sufferings for conscience sake, and the sacrifices they have made at the shrine of truth, furnish unambiguous evidence of their integrity and christian zeal.

The learning, piety, candor, and virtuous conduct of those writers called the polish brethren, must be admitted by men of all parties who have attended to their history, and examined their writings, with impartiality; yet in the eyes of many reputed orthodox men they were arrant heretics.

Among what denomination of christians are we to rank some of the greatest scholars, most distinguished philosophers, and profound theologians our own country has produced? Sir Isaac Newton, who explored the most intricate paths of science, and immortalized his name, by placing philosophy on the most solid and rational basis, was a Unitarian. Dr. Samuel Clarke,

a man eminently distinguished by his learning, piety, deep research and acute reasoning, as a theologian, was a Unitarian. William Whiston, whose integrity, piety, and studious habits have never been questioned, was a Unitarian. John Locke, whose comprehensive views, solid reasoning, and liberal sentiments, displayed in his excellent works, will perpetuate his name and procure him honor to the latest generations of men, was a Unitarian. [Dr. Lardner, whose excellent writings commanded respect and grateful acknowledgments, even from mitred heads, whose credibility of the gospel history will be a lasting monument to his name, was a Unitarian. To these may be added a Sykes, a Price, a Kippis, a Wakefield, an Enfield, and many others, who have explored the paths of literature, enlarged the walks of science, and enlightened and improved mankind by their labors. All these justly celebrated characters were Unitarians, either of the reputed Arian or Socinian class; with the one or the other of these parties they must be ranked, and share with them the odium or the honor of reputed heretical pravity. One more name I must mention, a name which will be dear to posterity, so long as science is respected, and virtue and

goodness are admired : Dr. Priestley. He was one of the greatest philosophers, the ablest defenders of revelation, the most laborious writers, and, which is the highest praise of all, one of the best men, his age produced ; yet this great man lived and died in the belief of what have long been thought, by reputed orthodox men, the most heretical doctrines. I forbear to mention in this place the names of persons who still live to bless mankind by their instruction, to extend the sphere of human knowledge by their literary labors, and to adorn human nature by their virtues and excellencies, or I might show that some of the wisest and best men now living are exposed to the charge of heresy, as the term is commonly applied, as well as many of the pious dead.

It is worthy of observation that some learned and pious men, as they have advanced in years, have changed their opinions and become what is called heretical. The more they read and thought, and the more deeply they examined subjects, the less orthodox they were. As a sample of persons of this description, may be mentioned Dr. Whitby, Dr. Watts, and Mr. R. Robinson. Many of the reputed heretical teachers of the present day, began in reputed orthodox sentiments, and by further thought

and deeper study have been led to embrace opposite doctrines. It is natural to ask, are men, the further they advance in knowledge, piety and virtue the more liable to fall into error? Are their first or last thoughts, those opinions they adopted with but little examination, or those which they have attained by deep study and research, the most likely to be correct?

It is curious to observe how the word heretic has been sported with. In the eyes of the church of Rome all protestants are heretics. Different national churches denominate those who dissent from them sectaries, a word which, if it do not convey the same idea, comes pretty near in meaning to the term heretics: and different parties of dissenters have too frequently branded each other with the name of heretics. Formerly the application of this term was followed with bonds and imprisonment, tortures and death; at present it is only a bugbear, intended to intimidate and restrain from free enquiry after truth, and discovers nothing so much as the want of argument, and of the true christian spirit, in those who apply it, as a term of reproach, to their christian brethren who differ from them.

By this time the reader may be prepared to attend to the case of Servetus, without bringing with him to the examination of the subject, [the unfavorable and unjust supposition, that he was either weak, ignorant and obstinate, or that he was profane and vicious. Though he died under the charge of heresy he might be a wise and good man; for we have seen that some of the wisest and best of men have been charged with heretical pravity. That Servetus was not weak and ignorant is evident from his literary labors and attainments. On the contrary he must have possessed strong powers of mind, and have been deeply studious, or he could not have done what he did. As to his being charged with obstinacy, nothing has been more common than to charge those with obstinacy who have been firm enough not to act contrary to the convictions of their own minds. What at one time has been deemed constancy in the truth, and been supposed to add lustre to the sufferings of the martyr, has at another time been deemed heretical obstinacy. Had Servetus been a bad man his crimes would not have been concealed, his enemies would no doubt have published them to the world. Could they have impeached his moral character, or detected any thing criminal in his conduct, they would not

have founded their charge of criminality merely on his religious opinions. They had nothing to charge him with but what they deemed his erroneous doctrines.

Let it be remembered the character of this unsuccessful reformer ought to be estimated, not by what the christian world, half-awakened from its long sleep of ignorance and superstition, thought of him, nor by what those who were evidently prejudiced wrote and said of him: but by what can be ascertained of his real sentiments, spirit and conduct. Let the maxim of Christ ever be remembered. *A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither doth a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit. By their fruits ye shall know them.* By this rule we ought to judge of Servetus. If a man of integrity and virtue, he was no doubt accepted with God; nor had his enemies any right to persecute or use him ill. He judged for himself, he wrote and published what he thought true, and who had a right to blame, much less to burn him, for using this Liberty?

## SECTION III.

*The difficulty of obtaining a full and impartial account of Dr. Servetus.*

No class of men have had greater injustice done them than reputed heretics. Not content with persecuting them while living, nor even with putting them to a shameful and cruel death, their oppressors have endeavored to render their memory infamous. Their enemies had generally influence enough to gain credit to whatever reports they might choose to propagate: and reports circulated by prejudiced persons would accumulate to a bolder tone of calumny as they spread. While the supposed heretic was treated as a real criminal, by those who professed to be the real ministers of Christ, the zealous guardians of divine truth, and who possessed high authority in the church, the common people, judging of him, not by an examination of his real sentiments, spirit and conduct, but merely by the treatment he received from those they regarded as a kind of oracles, would naturally conclude he was justly punished, and easily give credit to the tales which were circulated to his disadvantage. The writings

of reputed heretics were usually destroyed with them, which gave their enemies an opportunity of representing their opinions in whatever light they pleased, without fear of detection: and it may well be supposed that those who burnt their persons would not pay much regard to justice in the representation they gave of their doctrines. Frequently the persecuted had no friends left to plead their cause, or do justice to their memory; while the persecutors had a great sway in the church, a general influence over the judgment of its members, and maintained their cause by the strong arm of power. If the reputed heretic had friends they were awed into silence by the terrors with which persecutors never fail to array themselves. If any friend to truth and justice dared to lift up his voice in defence of the injured, if he escaped the same fate, his voice would be drowned by the clamor of reputed orthodoxy, and the outcry against supposed heresy. A *Paul* might try to be heard at Ephesus in defence of the faith of Christ, his voice was drowned by the clamor of the multitude, stirred up by the craftsmen, shouting, 'Great is Diana of the Ephesians.' Sometimes ages rolled away before a favorable opportunity offered of doing justice to the character of men whose lives were violently taken



in his reasoning, more difficulty in refuting his arguments, than they were willing to admit, or they would not have destroyed him and his writings. He had nothing to support his doctrines, or to annoy his opposers, but reason and scripture: and could men, who had nothing but the promotion of truth in view, be afraid of such weapons?

The pretext for burning reputed heretical books has ever been, that it is dangerous to read them, that their tendency is to corrupt the minds of men. It is worth while to enquire who were the persons called upon to decide on the character and tendency of the proscribed books? Not the people at large, but a few men, who had a particular system to maintain, and were interested in the condemnation of whatever opposed their dogmas, and militated against their usurped authority in the church, Persecutors assumed to themselves the right of judging for all the world, of deciding with an air of infallibility, on the writings of others: they had the audacity to take upon them to determine what the rest of mankind should, and what they should not read, at least so far as their power and influence extended! Even in the present more enlightened age something of the same spirit still remains; there are those

who would proscribe the writings of their opponents if they had the power; they give proof of this by doing all they can to prevent their being circulated and read. Arrogant men! Have not others understanding as well as you? Are you the only men of judgment, and shall wisdom die with you? Show your superior sagacity, not by condemning and burning, nor by restraining in any form, but by refuting those books you deem heretical. When shall the happy time come when all christians, filled with the spirit of liberty and independence, shall spurn the degrading idea that they are not competent to judge for themselves on every subject? After all, those men who would be lords over God's heritage, have preserved, with a view to justify their persecuting spirit, and to calumniate the memory of those they treated as heretics, what they thought most false and dangerous in the writings they destroyed.

Servetus was connected with no religious party. He was the first man, at that time, who dared openly to attack those corruptions of the christian doctrine, which both papists and protestants deemed fundamental truths of religion. He had no avowed disciples, no adherents; he stood alone in the difficult and dangerous attempt

to reform what the whole christian world thought too sacred to be scrutinized. He had no relative, no friend, at hand, to espouse his cause and vindicate his memory. He left no associates to disabuse the world by giving a fair statement of his character and doctrine. Hence it may be concluded that the world at that time would receive very wrong ideas of him and his opinions: and wrong ideas once received, in such circumstances, would be likely to pass down the stream of time and remain current for ages. An honorable or dishonorable place in the page of history is not procured merely by the excellency, or the worthlessness, of the character described. Historians, in the representation they give of particular persons, are influenced by a variety of circumstances. Their accounts too frequently derive their coloring from the opinions and prejudices of their own times. The accounts given of Servetus, by writers of that age, ought to be read with much caution, and are likely to be erroneous in some particulars.

The enemies of Servetus had a very extensive influence in the protestant churches, of which they were the founders and leaders. Their opinions have great authority with multitudes to the present day. Many christians still think it

criminal to charge them with great errors. They employed all their influence, used every means in their power, to degrade the character and blacken the opinions of the person they had destroyed. This the desire of justifying themselves, equally with their rooted aversion to him and his notions, would prompt them to do. Their pens were employed in vindicating their cruelty in putting him to death: and to accomplish this they represented him in the worst light they could.

In such circumstances, and under the influence of such feelings, they would draw a veil over his virtues, keep out of sight his learning and general good character, mangle his writings, catch up every idle report and circulate it to his disadvantage, distort his expressions, disguise his sentiments, and excite all the prejudice they could against him, to render his name execrable. Blinded by prejudice themselves, irritated by the opposition he had made to their favorite notions, fired by a false zeal, and wrought up to a persuasion that they were doing God service by decrying such a heretic and rendering his opinions odious, they would not be aware of the length to which they proceeded in misrepresentation and injustice. Having once committed

themselves so far, in the face of the whole world, as to condemn and burn him as an infamous heretic, they were not likely to desist from loading his name with infamy.

The minds of men at that time were strongly prepossessed in favor of the opinions Servetus attempted to explode, and deeply prejudiced against those he inculcated. Hence they would readily credit whatever was reported to his discredit, and suppose him to maintain the most absurd notions imputed to him by his adversaries. They would take for granted that he was a bad man, and, without examination, regard his opinions with detestation. The same prejudices have, in some degree, retained their influence with multitudes of christians to the present time: hence the respect due to his memory, as a virtuous man, and faithful martyr, has been unjustly withheld.

The preceding remarks are sufficient to show that to give an impartial account of Dr. Servetus and his writings is attended with no small difficulty. We must collect what we can from different writers, and make those conclusions which appear most probable.

## SECTION IV.

*A glance at the state of the christian world down to the period of Servetus' sufferings.*

Rightly to appreciate the character of Servetus, and judge of his actions, it will be necessary to consider the state of the christian world in his day. To form an accurate judgment of the reformers, their religious views, and plans of reform, so as duly to estimate their moral worth, and the consistency of their measures, requires that we look back to the days of Christ and his apostles, compare the systems they adopted with the New Testament; that we also glance at the gradual corruption of christianity, and the gross darkness of the middle ages; and that we remember that the reformation was but the dawn of a brighter day; otherwise we shall not be prepared to make due allowance for the imperfection of their views, spirit and conduct. Nothing more than a glance at these things is intended in this place.

Christianity, as taught by Jesus and his apostles, was a system of pure truth, stated with the

greatest simplicity, perfectly consistent with reason, and adapted to the common sense of mankind. The primitive gospel was a declaration of plain facts: on the ground of which a few simple, but most important, doctrines were established. Its positive institutes were few and simple, without the least mixture of superstition: they naturally associated with its leading truths and the great ends of its introduction. Its precepts were most holy and perfectly adapted to the present state of man. Its temper was mild and unassuming. The whole system was easy to comprehend, and calculated to lead to the highest pitch of moral excellence possible in a state of mortality. Such was the christian religion as taught by its founders. To its primitive simplicity, and original purity of doctrine and practice, it should be the aim of every reformer to restore it. In the degree in which reformers aim at this point should the value of their labors be estimated.

The sun of righteousness which arose in the land of Judea, and darted its rays to distant countries, was soon enveloped in clouds, which continued to accumulate, until the darkness of error and superstition, under the christian name, covered the earth. The gospel began to be corrupted while some of its first teachers, the

apostles of Jesus, were yet living. A fondness for ceremony and outward show, with a desire to shun reproach, led some to judaize christianity, and associate with it the ceremonies of Moses, while others, by their false philosophy, disguised its leading facts, and corrupted its simple doctrines. Scarcely had a spirit of worldly ambition been prevented rising among our Lord's disciples while he was yet with them: after his decease, though his apostles were cured of this mania, and exercised no domination, showed no spirit of intolerance, these baleful plants soon sprang up, and grew with rapidity, among his professed followers. Influenced by narrow views, or sinister motives, there were those, in the first and best days of the church, who attempted to curtail the liberties of christians, and to make themselves heads and leaders of parties. With difficulty was the genuine spirit and practice of christianity preserved even under the fostering care of its founders.

Among the great corruptions of the christian doctrine, the most leading and prominent consisted in a departure from that simple fact, which the New Testament lays as the foundation of the whole system, the messiahship of the man Jesus, and the gradual transformation of



the most humble and lowly, though the most glorious, of all the messengers of God, of a person who was born, suffered and died, who called himself the Son of man, and whom his apostles declared to be a man, into the self-existent and eternal God. The corruption of the most leading and fundamental doctrine of the gospel must necessarily have obscured the whole system, and confused the ideas of christians upon most other subjects. The notion that Christ is truly God naturally subverted the doctrine of the divine unity, and introduced a world of unintelligible jargon about three persons, or subsistences, in one individual being, which, under the name of the holy trinity, produced the most violent contentions, and for ages distracted and tore in pieces the church. Nor is it to be wondered that when men departed so far from reason and scripture, and spent their time in contending about what is incomprehensible, confusion and every evil work should ensue. Opposition to this grand corruption of the christian doctrine was, in the eyes of some of the reformers an unpardonable crime, of this imaginary crime Servetus was guilty, and for it he suffered an ignominious death.

Among the corruptions of the ordinances of Jesus Christ, that of baptism is not the least,

associated as it has been with the notion of hereditary depravity, and imagined to introduce innocent babes from a state of wrath into a state of grace and acceptance with God. Infant baptism and original sin were opposed by Servetus as corruptions of christianity; this was deemed criminal by the reformers, who were very strenuous for those points.

A departure from the plain declarations of scripture, and the sober use of reason in matters of religion, destroyed the simplicity of christianity, both in doctrine and worship: and, by the application of an abstruse and unintelligible phraseology to almost every thing which related to faith and practice the whole was gradually turned into mystery. Then for a man to use his reason and refuse to admit the truth of what he could not understand was thought criminal. Servetus used his reason in judging of the sense of scripture, and rejected such doctrines as he thought unreasonable. The reformers were still for retaining many unintelligible doctrines, of course his conduct gave them great offence.

Though Jesus had taught that his disciples are all brethren and fellow servants, and his apostles disavowed dominion over the faith of others, claiming no lordship over God's heritage, the teaching of the great Master, and the

example of his faithful servants, were in after ages totally disregarded. The professed ministers of the gospel, without scruple, assumed to themselves lordship and dominion, and gradually attained to such a height of power as enabled them to impose a yoke of bondage on the necks of their brethren, and to tyrannize over the whole christian world. A despotism the most odious and destructive was established on the ruins of primitive christianity. The man of sin, sitting in the temple of God, exalted above all that is called god among men, claimed supreme dominion over the faith and consciences of others, ruled with the most despotic sway, destroyed those who refused to submit to his yoke; and mankind were tame enough to prostrate themselves in the dust before him, to permit him to set his feet on the necks of kings, and bind whole nations with the fetters of superstition.

Long inured to ecclesiastical tyranny and the most degrading servility, those who broke from under the papal yoke, supposing it lawful to support truth by coercion, and to suppress what they thought erroneous by the strong arm of power, hesitated not to exercise dominion over conscience in their turn, and to destroy those who would not submit to their authority.

This seems to have arisen from the habits of thinking and acting which they had formed in the popish community. Happy had it been for themselves and mankind if when they quitted the church of Rome they had left the spirit of popery behind them ; but, alas ! they animated the churches they formed with the old antichristian spirit of persecution.

Christianity being corrupted in its doctrines and discipline, the use of reason supplanted by implicit faith in prescribed dogmas and mystical interpretations, christian liberty destroyed and religious tyranny every where triumphant, the holy influences of the gospel would be but little felt, its genuine spirit would die away, and a temper more consonant with the existing state of things manifest itself. This was really the case, except with a persecuted few, who continued faithful in the most degenerate times. The church was become a worldly kingdom ; the bulk of its members were become corrupt both in principle and practice ; a spirit of ambition, pride and persecution influenced its rulers, and contaminated the body at large. Fraud and force were the engines by which the complicated system of corruption was supported ; anathemas, racks and tortures, the weapons employed by its advocates for the destruction

of those who dared to oppose the prevailing abominations. To condemn and destroy those who were accused of heresy had been so long the uniform practice, that men, otherwise virtuous and good, did not suspect it to be wrong, if they were persuaded that the persecuted were really in error, and refused to retract their opinions. Perverted by such corrupt maxims, the reformers felt not that they did wrong when they persecuted those who differed from them: so greatly had their connexion with the anti-christian church of Rome defiled their consciences, i. e. perverted their sense of right and wrong.

The middle ages, those times of ignorance and barbarism which followed the destruction of the western empire, were highly favorable to the growth of error, superstition and religious tyranny. During that long night of illiteracy, while men continued in the sleep of ignorance, the enemy sowed the tares. Strangers to literature and science, generally incapable of reading and judging for themselves, and groaning under the yoke of feudal despotism, the people knew nothing about religion but what their priests, who were the tools of a foreign ecclesiastical despot, and the devotees of the reigning

superstition, chose to tell them. To the priests they often resorted, not only for religious instruction, but for protection from the fury or avarice of some petty tyrant. To escape the teeth of the lion they threw themselves into the paws of the bear. The priests, ignorant as they were, knew how to avail themselves of circumstances, for the increase of their own influence and power. They extended their jurisdiction by the erection of spiritual courts; they drew the wealth of the laity into their hands; they acquired dominion over their faith, their consciences, their property, and became all powerful. They had the address to induce mankind to believe that their influence extended beyond the grave, and that the happiness of the dead, as well as of the living, depended on them. What would not a people immersed in ignorance, caught in the toils of priestcraft, and bound in the fetters of superstition, believe from the lips of a ghostly father, to whom they had already sacrificed reason and committed the keeping of their conscience? Of course a system of the grossest corruption in doctrine, and of the vilest superstition in practice, spread and took deep root every where: the kings of the earth assisted with all their power to give it a firm establishment, and to cut off all who

dared to rise up against it. Thus error, superstition and ecclesiastical tyranny were brought to maturity amidst the darkness of the middle ages, and deeply entrenched in the strong holds of prejudice and power, and encompassed with proscribing laws and all the instruments of persecution and death.

A variety of circumstances operated to produce a revival of literature among those nations which had long bowed their necks to the papal yoke. Literature has ever been favorable to the cause of liberty and religion. As men became enlightened they felt uneasy under the galling yoke of priestcraft and superstition. The general corruption of manners, the abominable lives of many of the priests, the nefarious practices by which they supported their cause, the barefaced tyranny and undisguised villany of the pope and his agents, became too notorious to be any longer concealed, and too grievous to be patiently indured, in an age when some degree of light was breaking forth. Nothing was necessary to the commencement of a reformation, but for some leader, of intrepid and daring mind, to enter upon the work with firm resolution, and to persevere in it with undaunted courage. The political state of Europe, the revival of literature, and the sense of

ecclesiastical oppression, which began to be widely felt, would be favorable to his efforts, and the blessing of providence might be expected on so good a work. Roused by the indecent manner in which vice was tolerated, by the public sale of indulgences in Germany, Martin Luther began the reformation. He was a man qualified for the arduous undertaking. Resolute and daring, he gained strength from opposition, fresh courage from the experience of difficulties, became fearless amid the greatest dangers, and displayed a firmness of soul which raised him superior to his opponents. By such a man the anathemas of the court of Rome, which oft had made whole nations tremble, and all the terrors set in array against him by priestcraft and her minions, were disregarded and had in derision. Though he sometimes attacked superstition with a degree of rudeness, his courage and daring spirit were essential to his success. The conduct of his enemies pushed him on beyond the point at which he originally aimed, and might, owing to the warmth of his temper, hurry him into some excesses; but, whatever were his defects, he was such a man as the circumstances of the times rendered necessary, as the agent of a successful reformation. Luther was soon followed in the work he had



undertaken by men of learning, piety and zeal, in the neighbouring countries; and, notwithstanding the church of Rome exerted all its power and influence to counteract their efforts, and retain her usurped dominion, they burst her bands asunder, cast her cords from them, effected an important change in the christian world, and gave such a blow to superstition as will ultimately terminate its existence.

After all it must be acknowledged that the reformation was but partial. It was but the commencement of a new æra. It would be unreasonable to expect that errors and corruptions which had been ages accumulating, and which ages of the grossest ignorance had consolidated in one unwieldy mass, which had entwined themselves about every mind, and been so long sanctioned by the highest authority on earth, should be all detected at once, or, if detected, that they should be reformed by a single effort. Stricken with the more palpable absurdities and glaring superstition of the romish community, to the reformation of these Luther and his coadjutors directed all their efforts. They contented themselves with tearing away the filthy trappings of the mother of harlots, with destroying her tyrannical government,

and renouncing her grosser abominations; they did not seem even to suspect that by her the most essential truths of the gospel had been corrupted. Hence when they separated from that apostate church they retained many of her doctrines. In the belief of the trinity, of original sin, of infant baptism, of the mysterious nature of some doctrines of revelation, of the propriety of putting heretics to death, and various other points, the reformers continued to agree with the romanists. They did not discover that, as the corruptions of christianity did not first commence with the papists, many of them being of a more ancient date, and only brought to maturity at Rome, reformation should be carried beyond those things which originated in the papal church, and that every thing should be deemed a corruption which does not agree with the New Testament.

Servetus seems to have been the first man, in those days, who had the sagacity to detect, and the courage to oppose, the corruption of that fundamental doctrine of both natural and revealed religion, the unity of God. However confused some of his ideas might be, he saw that the doctrine of the trinity, of original sin, and infant baptism were corruptions of christia-

nity, and had the courage to expose their fallacy. His doing this would naturally excite general alarm. For a young man, unconnected with any religious party, to make an open attack on doctrines held sacred by both catholics and protestants, would, of course, be thought arrogance and presumption, and subject him to general censure ; though his penetration and courage ought rather to have excited admiration.

Some of the reformers manifested a degree of timidity inconsistent with the fearless pursuit of truth ; they apprehended the reformation would be scandalized if such men as Servetus were tolerated, or if the free investigation of a doctrine so sacred as that of the trinity was supposed, should be permitted.

From the preceding remarks something may be perceived of the state of things at the time when Servetus appeared as the opposer of opinions held sacred by christians of all parties. There had been a long period of ignorance, superstition, mental bondage and religious tyranny ; during which all the doctrines of the gospel had been corrupted, the ordinances of Christ perverted, and an odious system of priestcraft and superstition substituted in the place of

genuine christianity. The reformation had commenced; but the reformers retained many of the doctrines of the church of Rome, and were influenced by the illiberal persecuting spirit of that community. Christian liberty was as yet but little understood, and still less practised. All parties thought it right to persecute, if the persecuted were in error. Each party of course thought their own opinions true, and that those who differed materially from them ought to be treated as heretics; consequently all parties persecuted when they had the power. As yet but half-awakened from the slumber of ignorance, still influenced by many prejudices, the generality of protestants were not prepared to take an impartial view of religious subjects in general. The examination of the scriptures had but just commenced; literature and science were yet in an infantile state; and christians were quite unaccustomed to the free and liberal investigation of subjects.

In the midst of these circumstances there arose a man who evinced superior discrimination and comprehension of mind. At an early period of life he detected the fallacy of opinions which had long been interwoven with the established creeds and formularies, which had

received the sanction of councils and for ages been thought indubitable, which even the reformers thought needed no reformation. Without any party or friends to support him, in the face of the most powerful opposition, of universal and deep rooted prejudices, and of the most imminent danger, unaided and alone, he dared to expose the most radical, yet least suspected, corruptions of christianity.. While the other reformers were tearing some branches from the tree of superstition, he struck a blow at the root, which even *they* were disposed to cherish. He must have had his local attachments, and an apprehension of the inconvenience, reproach and suffering, to which, in such an age, he exposed himself by the publication of singular and obnoxious opinions; but he rose superior to all these things, and dared to think freely and make his thoughts publicly known. It must have required much fortitude and strength of mind, much deep thought and close examination, surrounded as he was by error and superstition, to disengage himself so soon from the influence of received opinions, and prejudices, which had obtained a universal sway. He could promise himself neither worldly ease, nor reputation, nor emolument, as the fruit of his conduct; he had nothing to expect but contempt and danger.

He must have been a person of great integrity, of deep penetration, of capacious mind. This man was no other than the much injured and long calumniated Servetus.

It is hoped we are arrived at a period when complete justice may be done to the memory of so extraordinary a person, who sacrificed his life in defence of what he believed to be the truth of God.

## CHAPTER II,

### THE LIFE OF SERVETUS

TO THE TIME OF HIS ARREST AT VIENNE IN DAUPHINE.

*Sect. 1. The minority of Servetus. Conjectures respecting the formation of his character.—*

*Sect. 2. He publishes a book concerning the errors about a trinity, which creates great alarm among the protestants. Sect. 3. He publishes a second book on the trinity. Sect. 4. He*

*leaves Germany and goes to Paris. Sect. 5. An account of him during his stay at Paris.*

*Sect. 6. From his leaving Paris to his removal to Vienne in Dauphine. Sect. 7. During his residence at Vienne.*

It is impossible to give more than an outline of the life of Servetus; for he was known to the world chiefly by his writings. Of his sufferings, trial, and martyrdom, we shall be able to give a more circumstantial account. His life was short, being cut off in the prime of his days; but it seems not to have been barren of incident. The scenes through which he passed were greatly diversified, and generally crowded with difficulties and dangers. He travelled in his youth

from Spain to Italy, in the suit of a powerful monarch, which would give him an opportunity of contemplating the pomp of a court, and the parade of superstition, but his heart was not seduced by the one, nor corrupted by the other: afterwards he travelled into Switzerland and Germany, besides being in various parts of France. He pursued his studies in the university of Thoulouse in his youth, in that of Paris in his more mature age. He received academical honors, was a Master of Arts, Doctor of Medicine, and Professor of Mathematics. He wrote much on Theology, Medicine, and Geography. He distinguished himself as a medical professor, in which capacity he acted in Paris, and other cities in France; but he is most known as a fearless investigator of religious truth. He seems to have made the most of the short period allowed him in this world. Every where he met with reproach and ill treatment, and at last fell a victim to bigotry and a persecuting spirit. Such was the person of whose history the following is an outline.

Every humane man will regret that he did not meet with better treatment, especially from protestants, and that he was so prematurely cut off. It is not uncommon for the world to be



ungrateful to its greatest benefactors, and to regard as innovators and dangerous characters, those who exert themselves the most to enlighten and improve mankind. It is frequently left to posterity rightly to appreciate the labors of those who have been most assiduous in promoting the information, and, consequently, the happiness of others.

Those who will dare to attack long established opinions and customs, however erroneous, must make up their account to suffer reproach and many inconveniences. This however ought not to deter them from doing every thing in their power, to expunge ignorance and superstition, whatever treatment they may receive, their labors will not be in vain, posterity will bless their memory, and God will reward their work.

In writing the following brief account, of the persecuted Spanish Physician, I have collected every material circumstance I have met with in different writers: and it is hoped, imperfect as it is acknowledged to be, it will give the reader a pretty fair idea of his life, as well as of the spirit of the reformers, and that the due consideration of the whole matter may tend to diminish what remains of bigotry and party spirit among the professors of the gospel.

## SECTION I.

*The minority of Servetus. Conjectures respecting the formation of his character.*

Little is known of the early part of the life of Servetus; like many other distinguished characters, who have devoted their lives to the service of mankind, his history remains unknown, prior to the commencement of his public labors. It would be gratifying to be particularly informed of the circumstances which attended persons of eminent wisdom, virtue and usefulness, from their infancy to the time of their appearance as public characters; but such information is seldom to be obtained.

Writers are not agreed as to the place where Servetus was born. Having called himself in the title of some of his books Michael of Villanova, and, in others, an Arragonian Spaniard, some have concluded that he was born at Villanova, or Villa Neuva, in Arragon; but this seems not to be the fact. It appears from his own confession, in his examination at Vienne, that he was born at Tudelle in Navarre. Some have conjectured that his ancestors had lived originally at Villanova, and had removed to

Tudelle. This is not improbable. The place of his birth is of no consequence any further than it might furnish a clue to the discovery of where he imbibed his religious opinions, and the circumstances which might lead his thoughts into so new and singular a train. From all the information that can be collected, it seems most likely that he descended from a Spanish family which had lately removed from Arragon, and at the time of his birth resided in Navarre. They might still call themselves of Villanova, having lately left that place, and, probably, possessed some estate there.

Servetus was born either in the year 1509, or 1511; for about the time of his birth historians are not agreed. His father was a Notary. Who were his teachers we are not told, but it is evident his education was liberal. It is said he had naturally a great deal of ingenuity, and inclination for the sciences; and from his earliest youth applied himself incessantly, to the most serious studies, wherein he made such a rapid progress, that at fourteen years of age he is said to have understood Latin, Greek, Hebrew, and to have had a pretty extensive knowledge of philosophy, mathematics, and the scholastic divinity. We are told, that when about fifteen

years of age he was taken into the service of Charles the fifth's Confessor, called Quintaine, and went into Italy among the attendants of that emperor, whom he saw crowned at Boulogna. It is probable it was on his return from Italy that his father sent him to the university of Thoulouse, to study the civil law; for that he sent him to that university good writers positively assert, and the fact has never been disproved. At Thoulouse, it seems, he devoted much of his time to the study of the scriptures. After he had been two or three years there, it is said, he resolved to retire into Germany and set up for a reformer. It appears he had meditated a great plan of reform, the bringing the christian world back to the simple doctrines of scripture. This was a herculean labor. He did not enter precipitately upon it; but first conferred with some of the reformers. He went to Basil by way of Lyons, and Geneva; and having had some conferences at Basil with Oecolampadius, he set out for Strasburgh, being extremely desirous to discourse with Bucer and Capito, two celebrated reformers of that city. At his departure from Basil, he left a manuscript which he had written against the trinity in the hands of Conrad Rouss, a bookseller, who sent it afterwards to Hagenau. Servetus went thither to

get it printed, in the year 1531. This is all we know of him prior to the publication of his first book.

By what means was the character of Servetus formed? What excited in him the train of thought he pursued, and led him to form the opinions in defence of which he sacrificed his life? These are interesting enquiries, and, though I dare not attempt a direct answer, I will hazard the following conjectures.

His character could not be formed on the model of what he saw, nor through the influence of the maxims and spirit which prevailed, in the catholic church. His opinions could not be derived from any of the doctors of the latin or greek churches, who lived in or near his times, nor from any of the leaders of the newly formed protestant churches. All writings containing such doctrines as he believed had long been prohibited in the christian world. He was no doubt an original genius, he possessed extraordinary natural powers, and was of a manly spirit; but how oft is genius cramped by untoward circumstances, the best natural powers rendered torpid or diverted into a corrupt channel, and the most manly spirit tamed by superstition, or broken by oppression. A vast combination of

circumstances are necessary to the production of a truly great character.

Some have made Servetus cross over into Africa, and imbibe his opinions from the Mahomedans; but of this there is not the least shadow of evidence; on the contrary it is pretty certain he never was in that country; for in his Ptolemy he always speaks of Africa from report, and never from his own observations. Others have supposed he imbibed his religious notions in Italy; but there is nothing to support this conjecture, except that there were people in Italy at the same time of his opinion: but it is in the highest degree improbable, that they would communicate their religious views to a youth, in the train of a bigotted monarch, and in the immediate service of a popish confessor, even supposing there were unitarians in Italy at the time he was there.

The family of Servetus had resided in a country where a high degree of civil and religious liberty had long been enjoyed, in comparison of what existed in the neighbouring nations; for Spain was not always the footstool of superstition, the victim of civil and religious despotism. While the Moors ruled in that country the people were free in all matters of religion and conscience; and arts, manufactures, and trade

flourished. When the christian government revived and extended, especially in Arragon, it was government by law, and the governors, as well as the governed were amenable to the laws. Then the Arragonian stood erect, he dared to think, and to speak and act according to his thoughts. It was gradually that civil despotism, aided by its faithful ally, ecclesiastical tyranny, undermined and trampled on the laws and liberties of the people, and so introduced persecution and slavery. It seems unitarianism had flourished in some parts of Spain until the country was enslaved.

If the ancestors of Servetus left their native country because its laws were subverted and its liberties no more, and to avoid the cruel fangs of merciless inquisitors, which is not improbable, they would naturally cherish the love of liberty, and instil it into their offspring; they would endeavor to excite in him a manly spirit and an abhorrence of civil and religious tyranny. If they came from Villanova, in the county of Urgel, which has been called the old seat of unitarianism, it is probable they brought with them to their new residence, unitarian principles: and of course would communicate them to their son. Mr. Robinson says, Servetus 'was an Arragonian of the old cast, and seems to have

imbibed both the political and religious principles of his ancestors ; for it is far more probable that he was trained up in those principles, in a country where it is known they had always been inculcated from the times of the Goths, than that he learned them all on a sudden in Italy.'

In Navarre, where we suppose Servetus was born, and received the first rudiments of his education, some degree of civil and religious liberty still existed. 'There (says the above writer) Jews, Moors, and Christians, lived at ease, and there most likely he received his education and his notions of civil and religious liberty, as well as his knowledge of physic, and his peculiar sentiments of religion.' Brought up amid the vallies and mountains where the Waldenses had once flourished, many of whom were unitarians, an ingenious and studious youth, might meditate on their history, and it would be natural for him to catch something of their spirit, and have his mind excited to the examination of their principles. He might converse with Jews and Mahommedans, without crossing to Africa, and be instructed by them in the doctrine of the divine unity. The bold scenery of nature around him would, in a mind so active and studious, inspire exalted thoughts



of the Deity, and lead to the contemplation of the one first cause of all things. Thus the rudiments of Servetus' character might be formed. The face of nature might, by the magnificent objects it exhibited, inspire the love of liberty in so ardent a mind, and awaken grand ideas. The voice of paternal instruction might foster the impressions nature made, and direct his thoughts into the channel in which they flowed. If he met with no written accounts of the Waldenses, traditions concerning them were likely to reach his ear, and excite sympathy and congenial thoughts. Conversation with Jews or Mahommedans might convince him more fully of the divine unity, and an attention to the scriptures mature his judgment and establish him in his opinions.

After all, it must be acknowledged, these are but conjectures, yet they are founded in probability. It is possible for Servetus to have derived his opinions simply from the scriptures.—They most plainly teach the unity of God, and are utterly irreconcilable with the popular notions he opposed. Could it be proved that he derived those opinions, which were so obnoxious to the reformers, simply from the study of the scriptures, it would argue very strongly in favor of their consistency with divine revelation;

for it would be very unlikely that a youth, situated as he was, should perceive them in the sacred writings if they were not conspicuous there. It is presumed, that if christians would bring every opinion to the test of reason and scripture, they would find many things, which pass for doctrines of truth, to be extremely erroneous. Whatever might lead Servetus to the adoption of the opinions he maintained, he certainly believed them to be scriptural, and thought himself capable of defending them by scripture and reason: nor dare his opponents leave the points in dispute to be decided by rational and scriptural argument; they resorted to fire and faggot, and silenced him by taking away his life.

## SECTION II.

*Servetus publishes a book concerning the errors about a Trinity, which creates great alarm among the protestants.*

The bookseller at Basil, to whose care Servetus had entrusted his manuscript concerning the trinity, either through prejudice, or fear of the consequences, declined printing it. He

sent it to Haguenau, where Servetus went himself in order to hasten its publication. This work appeared in 1531. In it the author opposed the unintelligible notion of three persons in the Godhead, and asserted that the name Son of God denotes only a man.

The publication of a book of this kind was sure to give much alarm to the trinitarians. Bucer, who has been called *a very moderate man*, was irritated to such a degree, that he declared from the pulpit, *That Servetus deserved to be cut in pieces, and to have his bowels torn out of him.*

The divines in Switzerland were much offended. This appears from a letter of Oecolampadius to Bucer. 'I saw this week (says he) our friends of Berne, who make their compliments to you and to Capito. They are very much offended with the book entitled, *De Trinitatis Erroribus*, which some of them have seen. I desire you would acquaint Luther, that this book was printed out of this country, and without our knowledge. For (to mention but one article) it is an impudent thing to affirm, as the author does, that the Lutherans do not understand the doctrine of justification. But that man, whether he be a Photinian, or of any other sect, thinks he knows more than every body else. Our church will be very ill spoken of, unless our

divines make it their business to cry him down. I beseech you in particular, to keep a watchful eye over it, and to make an apology for our church, at least in your confutation inscribed to the emperor. We know not how that beast came to creep in among us. He wrests all the passages of the scripture, to prove that the Son is not co-eternal, and consubstantial with the Father, and that the man Christ is the Son of God.' *Oecolampadii & Zuingl. Epis.*

In the foregoing letter the writer expresses himself neither like a gentleman, nor like a christian. However, we are told, when the same Oecolampadius made a discoursè in the presence of the magistrates of Basil, to show that *De Trinitatis Erroribus* was a pernicious book, he expressed himself with great moderation. Whether this arose from his having thought further on the subject, and discovered that abuse is a poor substitute for argument, or that the awe he felt in the presence of his superiors restrained his temper, and curbed the violence of his zeal, we are not informed. It is said he also wrote two letters to Servetus, about his book, wherein he endeavored to confute him in a very civil manner, and intreated him to

renounce his errors. His endeavoring to confute him in a civil manner was very proper; it was much better than calling him a beast, and talking of crying him down; but his intreating him to renounce his errors, before he had convinced him they were errors, was inconsistent: it was either persuading him to act contrary to the convictions of his own mind, i. e. to be a hypocrite; or it implied that he was to take for granted that what his opponents condemned was really false, i. e. that he was to acknowledge their dominion over his faith, No man can honestly renounce his opinions however erroneous they may seem in the eyes of others, until he is convinced they are false: to intreat him to do it is to intreat him to act dishonestly. Oecolampadius took for granted the very point in question, that his own opinions were divine truths, and those of his opponent manifest errors; and he seemed to think that Servetus should admit this; otherwise how could he intreat him to change his opinions before he acknowledged himself convinced they were wrong? This mistake has been common among all the usurpers of dominion over conscience, from the first creed-mongers down to the dogmatists of the present day. To persuade men to renounce what they believe to be true,

is a gross insult to the understanding, and has a direct vicious tendency. For men professedly orthodox to talk as if their notions were indubitable, and identical with the gospel, and as if whatever opposes them must be unquestionably false, is an indirect assumption of infallibility, and lordship over the faith of others: it is one of the first principles of popery, and has ever proved the bane of free enquiry after truth.

In the year 1533, Melancthon wrote a letter to Joachim Camerarius, wherein he told him what he thought of Servetus and his books: among other things he says that he 'was always afraid disputes about the trinity would break out, some time or other.' And adds 'Good God! what tragedies will this question whether the Logos or word be an hypostasis, or subsistence, or person; whether the spirit be so likewise? raise among posterity.' This same Melancthon, who seemed so much to deplore the tragedies which the above question would occasion, on hearing that Servetus' book, concerning the trinity, was dispersed in Italy, and very much approved of by many Italians, wrote a letter to the senate of Venice, in the year

1539, importing that a book of Servetus', who had revived the errors of Paulus Samosatenus, was handed about in their country. He besought them to use their utmost endeavors, that the impious errors of that man might be avoided, rejected, and abhorred. What was this but to stimulate those tragedies, with the bare apprehension of which he professed to be so much affected? What could the tendency of such a letter be but to rouse the demon of persecution?

Such were the measures adopted by the professed reformers to stop the progress of free enquiry, and counteract the efforts of Servetus to promote a further reformation. They treated him with scurrility; they endeavored to prevent the circulation of his books by all the means in their power; they labored to prejudice his cause every where; their object was to cry him down; even a popish senate was invoked to use their utmost endeavors to cause his doctrine to be avoided, rejected, and abhorred, i. e. in plain language, to suppress his writings, with the whole weight of their power and authority, and to proscribe all who might seem to countenance them. Was it for this they cast off their sovereign lord the pope, broke the yoke of his tyranny from their necks, and

abjured the church of Rome ; that they might be popes themselves, impose a yoke of bondage upon the necks of others, and form a church after the model of that they had abjured ? Was it for this that they put the scriptures into the hands of the people, and made so loud an outcry against the errors and abominations of popery ; that they might anathematize those who gave a different sense of scripture to themselves ? Was it that they might be sole arbiters in religious controversy, and regarded as the infallible expositors of scripture, that they rejected the infallibility of popes and councils ? If not why did they attempt to suppress the writings of those who differed from them ?

### SECTION III.

*Servetus publishes a second book on the trinity.*

Unmoved by the censures and reproaches of reputed orthodox divines, the next year, 1532, he published another book against the trinity. This also was printed at Haguenau. In an advertisement to the reader, he retracted what he had before published against the common doctrine of the trinity ; not because he thought it



false, but because he thought it imperfect, as if written by a child to children. He added, that the confusion and impoliteness of his first work, must be ascribed to his unskilfulness, and the carelessness of the printer. It was not the doctrine, but the confused and incorrect statement he had given of it he retracted. He hoped no christian would be offended with the doctrine on that account, for God sometimes made use of weak means to diffuse his wisdom. 'This retraction was imputed to him as a crime, and urged as a proof of collusion and unsteadiness in him; and this by men, who had retracted opinions not words, and who called their own retractions a conversion from popery; a coming out of darkness into light, an effect of the grace of God, and the irresistible influence of his holy spirit; by men too who required all their followers to change their opinions, and who condemned the pontiff of Rome, and all his cardinals, the whole clergy, and all the catholic states, because they would not retract popery.' Why might it not be a virtue in him to correct a mistake, or retract what he thought imperfect, as well as in them: there is no doubt had he changed to their opinions they would have spoken of it as a virtue.

So far from its being any crime or disgrace for Servetus to retract what he thought wrong, it was an act of integrity, and did him honor. None but bigots will think it criminal to change their opinions: and none but weak or proud men will think themselves disgraced by retracting their mistakes: the doing it discovers real greatness of soul, and a sincere love of truth, while an obstinate defence of, and continuance in what is perceived to be imperfect, gives proof of littleness of mind, and indifference to that which is right.

For so young an author, so readily to acknowledge the imperfection of what he had published, was a clear proof of ingenuousness and humility. It seems it was impossible for him to please the reputed orthodox reformers. If he retracted any thing he had written, this was, in their estimation, a proof of collusion and unsteadiness. If he remained unalterable in his opinions, they thought him an obstinate heretic. It was not possible for him to give them any satisfaction, or to avoid their censures, so long as he could not admit their dogmas to be doctrines of divine truth; and that his conscience forbade.

Thus Servetus published two books against the trinity, and other popular notions, in less

than two years, without scrupling to put his name to them. This shows him to have been, at an early period of his life, the intrepid advocate of truth. It is said, though very young, he was extremely zealous for his opinions, and indeed this his conduct proved, nor was it any disgrace to him, for it is good to be zealously affected in a good cause. It has been conjectured that he was as yet but little acquainted with the principles of the reformers. He had visited and conversed with some of them, he had no doubt acquainted himself with their principal doctrines; but it is probable he did not fully know the malignity of their spirit. Being lately come out of France, into a protestant country, he supposed he might write as freely against the trinity, as they did against transubstantiation.

#### SECTION IV.

*Servetus leaves Germany and goes to Paris.*

After publishing the books already mentioned, Servetus left Germany. The reasons he gave for this step, when interrogated by his judges, were his poverty, and ignorance of the German language; but though these might be

his leading reasons, it is highly probable, other considerations helped to influence him to change his residence. Without doubt he quitted Germany with very different ideas of the reformers and their party to those he had entertained when he went thither. It is likely he expected to find those men who had protested against the tyranny and corruptions of the church of Rome, steady friends to free enquiry; and that he might propagate his own views of truth, not only with impunity, but with considerable success, in a country which had so recently given birth to the reformation, and made so noble a stand against clerical usurpation. In this he found himself disappointed. Experience had taught him, during his residence among them, that the reformers were no more favorable to his opinions than the romanists: that, though they had cast off the pope, they had in no wise renounced all the principles and maxims of popery: that he could expect no countenance nor support among them, unless he could bring himself to assent to their favorite notions: that there was but little prospect of effecting a change in the views of a people who were ignorant of the principles of liberty, fettered by creeds, and under the influence of a few great leaders: and that he could not avow his sentiments among them

without incurring reproach, and exciting the spirit of persecution. Convinced of these things, and feeling the inconveniences of poverty, it is not to be wondered, he resolved to withdraw from a country in which he was regarded as a dangerous character, and of whose language he had but an imperfect knowledge. It is likely he would leave it lamenting that the boasted reformation had done so little towards rooting out prejudice and bigotry, and inspiring the minds of christians with the noble principles of genuine liberty and charity. From what came out in the course of his trial, it appears that he was in a manner driven from Germany by the demon of persecution.

Leaving Germany he returned to Basil, and from thence proceeded to Lyons, where, it seems he continued for some time. Whether it was at this, or some other period, that he was corrector of the press at Lyons, or in what other pursuits he engaged during his stay there, we are not informed. It is not improbable, poverty might render it necessary for him to attend, for a time, to some employment, that would procure him pecuniary assistance, before he proceeded to the university of Paris. However this might be, his active mind would be still employed in the pursuit of truth, and the

acquisition of useful knowledge : he would be fortifying himself with virtuous principles and pious resolutions, and pondering the path he should choose, surrounded as he was with difficulties and dangers. Conscious that he had no source to which he could look for support but God and his own exertions, it was prudent for him to resolve on engaging in some profession, that would be useful to mankind, and procure him a decent subsistence. From his theological works he could expect no temporal advantage, perhaps, he sustained much loss by their publication ; for books cried down and proscribed as they were would not be likely to meet with a sale sufficient to defray the expense of printing them. From no party of christians had he any thing to expect but neglect, abuse and persecution. It is interesting to contemplate a young man, in such peculiar circumstances, making his way through all obstacles, until he attained considerable eminence in an honorable profession, and at the same time continuing his literary and theological labors for the good of mankind.

Having resolved on the medical profession, Servetus proceeded to the university of Paris, to enter upon the study of Physic. The precise time of his going to Paris is not known ;

but it could not be later than the year 1534; for we are informed that it was in that year Calvin opposed him in that city.

### SECTION V.

#### *An account of Servetus during his stay at Paris.*

At Paris Servetus studied medicine under the famous professors Sylvius and Fernel. He took his degree of Master of Arts, and was admitted Doctor of Medicine in that university.

At Paris he became acquainted with Calvin, who, as Servetus made no secret of his religious opinions, opposed his sentiments, and, it is said, a time was fixed for them to dispute with each other. This disputation Servetus declined. We are not told what were his reasons for declining it. They were much of an age, and it seems Servetus had no great opinion of the genius any more than of the opinions of Calvin: yet it is not likely he would decline the contest either out of contempt of the abilities of his antagonist, or because he was afraid of his arguments: his freely corresponding with him afterwards showed that he did not despise him, and his general conduct and writings prove that he feared no opponent. He might decline the contest, at

that time, because it would have interrupted the studies and pursuits in which he was engaged; or because he had already received such a specimen of the spirit of the reformers that he supposed a controversy with them, instead of producing any good effect, would only irritate and do harm; or because he did not think he should meet with fair treatment in the disputation; or he might not think himself capable of doing his own cause justice in a verbal controversy; or he might not approve of such public disputations; or he might apprehend a snare was laid for him, and that his liberty, if not his life, would be endangered, if he did not decline the contest; or there might be other reasons which rendered it impossible for him to engage in it at that time. However it might be, after the zeal he had already manifested in supporting his opinions, it would be unreasonable to suppose he did not think himself capable of defending them.

After being admitted Doctor of Medicine, Servetus went and professed mathematics in the Lombard College. It is supposed it was about this time he was employed in preparing for the press a new edition of Ptolemy's Geography. He also practised physic at Paris, and published three or four detached pieces. One was an



apology for Dr. Champier at Lyons : another a professional piece, *De Syrupis*. He had a dispute with the physicians of Paris, which obliged him to publish an apology for himself. This dispute rose to a process before parliament, which was terminated by the suppression of the Doctor's apology, and an order of the house to the physicians to live on better terms with him, and to use him with humanity. This implies that their treatment of him had been reprehensible. It seems the misunderstanding with his brethren of the profession made his living at Paris disagreeable to him : accordingly we find, soon after the termination of the above process, he retired from that city.

During his stay at Paris, Servetus had been usefully and honorably employed. His studies and pursuits had been various ; and his time must have been fully occupied. The medical art had been the leading object of his attention ; and the academical honors he received are a testimony to the progress he made in the knowledge of it. But his genius was not to be confined to one branch of science. He professed mathematics, and read lectures on that subject. In the midst of his professional duties, he found leisure to prepare for the press a considerable

work on geography, and to give private instructions on that branch of knowledge. His powers must have been very active, his mind capacious, and his industry great, or he could not have pursued such a variety of studies and employments at the same time.

What occasioned the Doctor's dispute with his brethren of the profession we are not informed. It is possible they might envy his reputation; or he might detect some errors in their mode of practice; or his penetrative mind might make discoveries, and adopt a mode of practice, which they would treat as romantic and dangerous. A person so inquisitive upon every subject, with a judgment so discriminating, so little attached to established systems of any kind, and so ardent in the pursuit of improvement, as the Doctor, was not likely to be tied down by received dogmas and prescribed rules in his profession; but a departure from these would be deemed, by men of little minds, a kind of medical heresy. In every department of science, and in most of the affairs of life, men have been too much enslaved by old habits and opinions.

## SECTION VI.

*An account of the Doctor from his leaving Paris to his removal to Vienne.*

Leaving Paris, Servetus went to Lyons, where he made some stay. He made a journey to Avignon, returned to Lyons, and at last settled at Charlieu, where he practised medicine about three years. He is accused of committing some blunder at Charlieu, which occasioned his leaving that place. Bolsec, the only writer who mentions it, does not say what it was. This undefined charge rests solely on the testimony of one man; and he seems, judging from his language, to write with no goodwill to the Doctor. He says 'This Servetus was arrogant and insolent, as those have affirmed who knew him at Charlieu;' but while he accuses him of arrogance and insolence, on the ground of what others affirmed, he neither mentions who the persons were that affirmed this, nor produces any instances of his arrogant and insolent behaviour. It is a mere charge without proof. No doubt the singularity of his opinions might create him enemies at Charlieu: his daring to think freely, and contradict their notions,

would seem to them a proof of arrogance and insolence. Bolsec says further, that 'he was forced to leave that place on account of his extravagances;' but he explains not what he means by extravagances. The Doctor has never been accused of extravagance in his mode of living. It must relate to his opinions, either medical or theological, perhaps to both. His opinions and conversation would appear extravagant to bigots and the slaves of superstition; and it is probable they would treat him in such a manner as would render it eligible for him once more to change his residence.

From Charlieu Servetus returned to Lyons, where he met with Peter Palmier, archbishop of Vienne, in Dauphine. This prelate had been some time ago at Paris either a friend or pupil of the Doctor, who had given him lectures on Ptolemy's geography. Being a great lover of learned men, and fond of Servetus, he pressed him to go to Vienne, to practice physic, and offered him an apartment in his palace. This offer the Doctor accepted.

His friendship with the archbishop, and residence in his palace, led the enemies of Servetus to reproach him with hypocrisy: as if two men of learning and liberal sentiments could not

live together in peace, however different their opinions on certain subjects, without one of them being a hypocrite. 'Not knowing (says Mr. Robinson) either his or his patron's principles of religious liberty, knowing for certain that one was what they called a popish prelate, and the other an antitrinitarian anabaptist; and judging of the conduct of both by their own maxims, they had no notion of two such men living together each in the enjoyment of his own religious principles, and neither presuming to offer any force to the other. This prelate seems to have been one of those, of whom there have been numbers in the catholic church, who think freely but do not act consistently, who regulate their own private conduct by principles the most virtuous and liberal, but who for reasons best known to themselves, adjust all their public measures by established rules of despotism, which they inwardly disapprove. It belongs to the great being alone to combine all the circumstances that go to make up the merit or demerit of such men: and to him alone it must be left to pass the definitive sentence. *If thou doest well, shalt thou not be accepted? and if thou doest not well, sin lieth at the door.*' Happy would it be, if christians of all parties, would treat each other with the forbearance and

respect which this roman catholic archbishop, and antitrinitarian baptist, notwithstanding the known discordance of their opinions, appear to have manifested during their long intimacy.

### SECTION VII.

#### *An account of Servetus during his residence at Vienne.*

During a residence of about thirteen years, the Doctor seems to have been fully employed at Vienne, either in the duties of his profession, or in some literary occupation. During that period he lived upon good terms with his right reverend patron, enjoying safety under his auspices, and might have continued to have done so had not his repose been destroyed by the wicked machinations of his enemies.

From Vienne he made frequent journies to Lyons, where he revised an edition of the Bible in folio, printed by Hugo de la Parte, to which he prefixed a preface, and added marginal notes. He likewise corrected several other books for the press, for John Frellon, a bookseller at Lyons, and translated some treatises on grammar from latin into Spanish.

Frellon, the bookseller just mentioned, was an admirer of Calvin. By some means he engaged Servetus to enter into an epistolary correspondence with that reformer. Calvin conducted the correspondence under the fictitious name of Charles D'Espeville, and the letters passed through the hands of Frellon.

Calvin says that Servetus sent him the three following questions from Lyons, and desired him to answer them. 1. *Whether the man Jesus who was crucified, is the Son of God; and what is the foundation of that Sonship?* 2. *Whether the kingdom of Christ is in men? when may a man be said to enter into it, and when to be regenerated?* 3. *Whether the baptism Christ instituted ought to be received in faith, even as the supper is? and to what purpose these were instituted under the new covenant?* Calvin answered these queries, but Servetus, far from being satisfied with his explications, wrote him a second letter, containing a confutation of his answers. Calvin being much displeased with that letter, made a sharp reply to it, as he himself owns. It seems he could not bear the liberty which the Doctor took with him, in controverting his opinions, and probably felt himself pushed hard by his arguments. Consequently, he determined to break off the correspondence, which

he signified in the following letter to his friend Frellon.

*Calvin's Letter to Frellon.*

MR. JOHN,

As to your last letters that came to my hand, upon my departure, I had no time to give an answer to the contents of them : since my return, with the first leisure I have had, I have been very fond of satisfying your desire, not that I have any great hopes of doing any good to such a man, seeing him so disposed, but in order to try if there is yet any means of reclaiming him, which will be, when God shall have so wrought in him, that he becomes another man. As to what he has written me with such a spirit of pride, I have been willing to bring down his arrogance, by talking to him in a harsher manner than I am accustomed to do. But I could not do otherwise ; for I assure you, that there is no lesson more necessary for him to learn, than that of humility ; and that must come from the grace of God, and no where else. But we ought likewise to put to our hand, if God grant his grace to him, and to us, that he profits by our present answer, I shall have wherein to rejoice ; if he goes on in such



a style as he has done hitherto, you will but lose your time to take any further pains upon him, for I have other affairs upon my hands that are more pressing; and I should have a scruple of conscience to give myself any further trouble about him, not doubting but he is a Satan, to turn my attention from other studies more useful. I entreat you therefore, to satisfy yourself with what I have done, if you can find no better way. Whereupon after my hearty recommendation, I pray our God to have you in his keeping. This 13th. of February, 1546.  
Your servant and entire Friend.

*Charles D'Espeville.'*

This letter Frellon sent to Servetus, underwritten with a note of his own. On Calvin's letter I make the following observations.

Calvin had not been accustomed to hear his opinions questioned, and his assertions contradicted; he had been in the habit of seeing others look up to him, and receive his dogmas as the dictates of truth: hence the person who dared to controvert his doctrines, appeared to him haughty and arrogant. Such is the effect of even great men receiving undue deference: it lifts them up in their own eyes, and leads them to despise others. Why should Servetus be

thought haughty and arrogant for contradicting Calvin, any more than Calvin for contradicting him? It had been well if Calvin had stood to his word, and no more troubled himself about the Doctor; but though he wished to avoid the trouble of any further epistolary correspondence with him, he afterwards gave himself the trouble of procuring his destruction, by stirring up a persecution against him. It was an ingenious device to get rid of the correspondence by declaring the Doctor to be a Satan, who turned his attention from more useful studies. It is very irksome for such men as Calvin, who have placed themselves at the head of a party, who are in the habit of dictating to others, and who are determined at all events to maintain the system they have adopted, to be pressed with questions which they cannot easily answer, and arguments which they cannot refute. It is very common for them to treat those who venture to make so free with them as troublesome persons, whom the devil stirs up to interrupt their usefulness. But who are they, and what are their dogmas, that no man may contradict them, and dispute the truth of their positions, nor even ask them sober questions, without being thought arrogant, and branded with the name of enemies to Christ, and instru-

ments of Satan, who interrupt the faithful servants of God, in the work to which he hath called them? No doubt the pope of Rome thought Calvin and all the reformers very troublesome fellows, and instruments of Satan, who interrupted him in what he thought his proper work. But did they admit the justice of his thoughts, or desist from their opposition to him, on account of any thing he thought or said?

At Vienne Servetus went by the name of Villaneuve. As his publications had made some noise in the world, it might have endangered his safety had he continued to use his own proper name. The name of Villaneuve he affixed to some of his writings. 'Calvin (says Mr. Robinson) reproached him with this, but his answer was satisfactory. Villanova had been the place of residence, perhaps the estate of his family. Mr. D'Artigny thinks his ancestors had removed from Villanova in Arragon to Tudelle in Navarre, and had retained the title of Villanova along with the family name. Nothing can be more likely, because nothing was more common than such removals and such descriptive titles.' However this might be, how could Calvin reproach Servetus with calling

himself Michael Villaneuve, or Villanova, with the least shadow of propriety, or even without condemning himself. He had changed his own name by latinizing it, and of *Chauvin*, his real name, made *Calvinus*, the name by which he chose to be called. He had also, as we have seen, written under the fictitious name of Charles D'Espeville. Another of the reformers, whose real name was *Schwartzerd*, had translated it into greek, and called himself *Melancthon*. How could it be any more criminal for Servetus to alter his name than it was for Calvin or Melancthon to alter theirs? Are reputed orthodox divines privileged to do with impunity what themselves condemn in others?

It appears that the Doctor wrote many letters during his residence at Vienne. Besides his correspondence with Calvin, which first and last extended to many letters, '*Patin* says, that *Dr. Delavau*, a physician at Poitiers, had by him fifty letters written to his father, by Servetus from Dauphine. He adds that *Scaliger* says he had seen them.' [*Patiniana*, p. 74, 75. Amst. 1703.] On what subjects these letters were written we are not informed. He also wrote a letter to another minister at Geneva, which we shall notice in another part of this work.

In 1541, the Doctor gave a second edition of his Ptolemy's geography, and dedicated it to his friend and protector, the archbishop.

In the year 1553. He printed his work entitled, *Christianismi Restitutio*, i. e. The restitution of Christianity. This work cost him four years labor. He is said to have sent the manuscript to a German, called Marinus, one of his friends, for him to get it printed at Basil. Either through fear, or prejudice, or from some other cause, it seems the booksellers in that city declined having any thing to do with it. Marinus sent him back the manuscript, acquainting him that he was not ignorant why he could not have it printed at Basil at that time. Not being able to succeed there, the Doctor intrusted it with Balthazar Arnoullet, a bookseller at Vienne in Dauphine, and William Gueroult, Arnoullet's brother-in-law, and director of his printing press. By arguments and promises he induced them to print it. He let them know that 'he had very strong reasons which would not allow him to put his name to it, nor the name of the city, nor of the printer; he added, to make them undertake it, that the impression should be at his own expense; that he would correct the proofs himself, and promised to each of them a gratuity of

a hundred crowns ; a considerable sum for that time.' This work was executed so secretly that not one person at Vienne had the least knowledge of it. When it was finished all the copies were sent to Lyons, from whence Frellon sent one part to Frankfort, the other part remained under the care of Peter Merrin, a caster of types, till an opportunity should offer of sending them to Italy. Some say there were eight hundred, others a thousand copies printed off. In all probability it would have passed into circulation in Germany and Italy, without either author or printer being detected by the papists, had it not been for the destructive vigilance of protestants, who betrayed the author into the hands of the common enemies of reformed christianity.

This was Servetus' last work, shortly after it was printed, an end was put to his useful labors. The demon of persecution dragged him from his peaceful retreat, his enemies gratified their resentment in his destruction. After passing through a shocking scene of persecution, he died a martyr to the cause he had espoused.

## CHAPTER III.

### PERSECUTION OF SERVETUS.

*Sect. 1. Calvin raises a persecution against Servetus. Sect. 2. He is arrested at Vienne, makes his escape, is burnt in effigy with his books; goes to Geneva, is arrested there. Sect. 3. Trial of Servetus at Geneva. Sect. 4. Articles extracted by Calvin from the books of Servetus, with a view to criminate him, with the Doctor's answers. Sect. 5. The petitions of Servetus to his judges respecting the cruel treatment he received. Sect. 6. The correspondence between Calvin, the magistrates of Geneva, and the other reformed ministers and magistrates, on the case of Servetus. Sect. 7. Servetus condemned to die. Sect. 8. His dying speech. Sect. 9. He is burnt alive.*

THE successful commencement of the reformation might naturally lead men to expect the revival of true christian liberty, that freedom of enquiry would no longer be thought criminal,

that no one would henceforward be persecuted for his opinions, that dungeons and the devouring flames would no more be the lot of virtuous men, at least in those countries where the reformed religion was adopted; but those who formed such pleasing expectations soon found themselves mistaken. The spirit of popery did not depart with the renunciation of the pope's authority, nor were the corrupt maxims of antichristian priests banished when the arbitrary edicts of the court of Rome were contemned; the same tyrannical measures which had so long disgraced the catholic church, were in too many instances adopted by the leaders of the reformation.

Servetus had already experienced many bitter reproaches from some of the reformed ministers, and been very ill treated by them; but a scene of trial and persecution awaited him, which what he had already met with could not lead him to apprehend, at least from those who had made so much outcry against the persecuting spirit and conduct of the papists. That those who had so lately broken from religious thralldom, and barely escaped being devoured by the demon of persecution themselves; who had protested against the dominion which the roman pontiff had usurped over the consciences



of men, and the arbitrary decrees of popish counsels, should, with an air of infallibility, lord it over the faith of others, endeavor to put their consciences in fetters, and destroy them merely for their opinions, may well excite surprise. Before the reader has gone through this chapter he will be convinced of the propriety of Grotius' remark, 'That the spirit of antichrist did appear as well at Geneva as at Rome.' The spirit of persecution is the spirit of antichrist, in whatever religious community it is found. Names cannot change the nature of things, and a reformed church, that is influenced by this spirit, is as much antichristian as the church of Rome. What does it signify to me, if I am robbed of christian liberty, whether the pope or John Calvin be the thief? If I am imprisoned and burnt for my opinions, it makes no difference whether it be by catholics or protestants.

### SECTION I.

#### *Calvin raises a persecution against Servetus.*

The great Calvin took a leading part in the persecution of the learned Spanish physician, not only at Geneva but also in France; as he

furnished the papists with letters, manuscripts, &c. which they considered to be heretical, and on the ground of which they condemned him to be burnt alive.

Calvin had long been greatly irritated with Servetus, as well as rooted in his aversion to his opinions. Hostilities seem to have commenced between these two learned men with the commencement of their acquaintance; and it is past all doubt that from the first they treated each other with too much acrimony. At Paris their intercourse and altercation began, it was afterwards renewed by means of Frellon a bookseller at Lyons; they became determined opponents, and made frequent reference to each others supposed errors in their writings and printed books.

The reformer of Geneva had been accustomed to speak authoritatively, to be heard with deference, and to see his dictates implicitly followed: even the magistrates of that city could not control him in his plans, so great was his influence. Such men know not how to bear opposition. Servetus, had too great a soul, too high a sense of independence, to submit to the dogmas of John Calvin, or of any other man. The reformer's favorite work was the book

entitled christian institutes, this the physician read as a critic, with his reasoning powers in free exercise: he filled the margin with notes repugnant to Calvin's sentiments. To find his favorite production treated as a book which contained many errors was highly displeasing to the author.

Some years before Servetus was arrested, he wrote to Calvin, and sent him a manuscript to peruse, on which he requested his thoughts. Instead of complying with this request, and endeavoring, by sober arguments, to convince the Doctor of what he thought his errors, he wrote letters to his friends Viret and Farel, in which he said that if ever this heretic should fall into his hands, he would order it so that it should cost him his life. Mr. D'Artigny affirms this. Bolsec and Grotius both saw the original letter, Uytenbogardt had a copy of it taken from a collection of manuscript epistles, and Calvin's admirers have not been able to deny it. Varillas affirms, that there is at Paris an original letter of Calvin to Farel, written in 1546, which was never printed, and that these words are to be found in it. 'Servetus has lately written to me, and sent me at the same time a large book stuffed with idle fancies, and full of arrogance. He says I shall find in it admirable things, and

such as have been hitherto unheard of. He offers to come hither, if I like it: but I will not engage my word; for if he comes, and if any regard be had to my authority, I shall not suffer him to escape without losing his life.' Sorbier mentions the same letter, and says that Grotius saw it at Paris, and that these words were in it: 'I am informed that Servetus is coming hither to have some conversation with me. If I have any influence on the magistrates of Geneva, I will take effectual care that he never goes hence alive.'

Calvin was so incensed against Servetus, that he could not forbear reviling him even in his commentaries on the bible. He calls him a profligate fellow, full of pride, and a dog. On the first verse of John's gospel he wrote these words: 'A Spaniard, called Servetus, has broached this doctrine, that the eternal word, only then began to be, when he manifested himself in the creation of the world, when St. John means quite otherwise; but I know the dog will bark at it.' He wrote this before Servetus came to Geneva: for the epistle dedicatory is dated January 1, 1553.

Calvin obtained a copy of Servetus' book entitled *Christianismi Restitutio*, it is not certain

by what means; he must have obtained it surreptitiously, for it had not been published: the most probable conjecture is, as some affirm, that his friend Frellon pilfered one from the parcel, which he undertook to convey to Frankfort. Calvin had an admirer at Geneva, one William Trie, a native of Lyons. Trie had a relation at Lyons named Arney, with whom he corresponded. Arney was a catholic, and incessantly exhorted his cousin Trie to return to the bosom of the church. Trie communicated Arney's letters to Calvin, who dictated answers to them, so that they are, as Mr. D'Artigny, who published them from originals, calls them, Calvin's letters under the name of William Trie. By means of this Trie, Calvin raised a persecution against Servetus at Vienne.—I will transcribe the letters which Trie wrote on the occasion. The following is the first.

*Trie's first Letter to Arney.*

'SIR, MY COUSIN,

I thank you heartily for so many fine remonstrances you have made, and do not doubt but you have acted from friendship, by endeavoring to bring me back to the place I have departed from; so much the more as I am not acquainted with letters as you

are. I shall, however, do my best to satisfy you as to the points and articles which you alleged: God has given me, however, so much knowledge that I have something to answer. For God be praised, I am not so ill founded as not to know, that the church hath Jesus Christ for its head, from which it never can be separated; and that it hath otherwise neither life nor salvation; and that above all, it cannot exist but in God's truth, which is contained in the holy scripture: and therefore, whatever you advance about the church I look upon as a perfect phantom except Jesus Christ presides in it, as having full authority, and that the word of God reigns there as the foundation and the substance, without which all your formalities go for nothing. I beg you will reflect on the liberty I take with you, which is not only to defend my cause, but to give you an opportunity of thinking seriously by yourself. But to be short, I am astonished how you dare reproach me amongst other things, with our having no ecclesiastical discipline or order; and that our teachers have introduced a licentiousness, which throws every thing into confusion; and yet at the same time, I can observe (blessed be God) that vices are better corrected here than among all

your officials. And as to the doctrine, and what concerns religion, although there is more liberty here than among you, nevertheless it is not permitted to blaspheme the name of God, or that doctrines or wicked opinions should be sown without being repressed. To your great confusion I can give you one example, since I am forced to mention it, which is, that with you they support a heretic, who deserves to be burnt wherever he is found ; when I mention to you a heretic, I mean one who shall be condemned by the papists, as well as by us, at least he deserves to be so ; for albeit we may differ in opinion about many things, yet we are still agreed, that there are three Persons in one Essence of God ; and that the Father hath begotten the Son, who is his eternal wisdom, before all time, and that he hath had his eternal virtue, which is his holy spirit. But when a man shall say, that the trinity which we maintain, is a Cerberus, an infernal monster ; and disgorge all the villanies that can possibly be thought of, against what the scripture teaches of the eternal generation of the Son of God ; and that the holy spirit is the efficacy of the Father and the Son, and with open mouth shall make a mock of all which the ancient doctors have taught. I beg to know what esteem and regard you can

have for him? I say this to obviate all the replies you can make me, and that you do not deceitfully hold that for an error which we maintain to be such: for what I have said you will not only acknowledge to be an error, but a detestable heresy, which is sufficient to abolish christianity; I am obliged to speak freely: what a shame it is that those are persecuted to death, who say, That we must invoke one only God, in the name of Jesus Christ; That there is no other satisfaction but that which has been made in the death and passion of Jesus Christ: That there is no other purgatory but in his blood; That there is no other service agreeable to God but that which he commands and approves by his word; That all pictures and images counterfeited by men, are so many idols which profane his Majesty; That we ought to keep the sacrament after the usage appointed by Jesus Christ? But to see that they are not content with putting such people simply to death, but that they should be cruelly burned. And yet behold him who shall call Jesus Christ an idol; who shall destroy all the foundations of faith; who shall gather together all the dreams of the ancient heretics; who shall even condemn the baptism of little children, calling



it a diabolical invention ; and yet he shall have the vogue amongst you, and be supported as if he had committed no fault. Where is, I pray you, the zeal you pretend to ? and where is the wisdom of this fine hierarchy you magnify so much ? The man I speak of to you, has been condemned in all the churches you reprove. In the mean time he is tolerated amongst you, even to the printing of his books ; which are so full of blasphemy, that I need not say any more of them. This man is a Portuguese Spaniard, called Michael Servetus for his proper name, but at present he calls himself Villeneuve, practising physic. He has made some stay at Lyons ; just now he is at Vienne, where the book I have mentioned, has been printed by a certain person who has directed the press, called Balthazard Arnoullet ; and that you may not think I talk upon hearsay, I send you the first sheet as a specimen. You say that such books as contain nothing else, but that, we must keep to the pure simplicity of the holy scripture, poison the world ; and if they came from any other quarter, you would not suffer them ; mean time you foster these poisons, which are enough to annihilate the holy scripture, and every article of the christian religion you believe. I had almost forgot myself by mentioning this exam-

ple; for I have been four times longer than I thought, but the enormity of the case has made me go beyond bounds: and for this reason I shall not be long upon other matters; as in truth I do not see any great necessity of answering you upon every article. Only I intreat you to enter a little further into your own conscience, that you may judge yourself; so that when you must appear before the great Judge, you may not be condemned. For to say all in one word, we have no other aim, except to ask of God that he would hear us; wherefore making an end for the present, I shall pray to God that he may give you ears to hear, and a heart to obey; that he may take you in the meantime into his holy keeping; recommending myself with great sincerity, to your favor, and that of my cousin your brother. From Geneva, February the 26th.'

This letter occasioned a prosecution against Servetus. Arney carried the letter with the sheet to Ory the inquisitor. Ory, finding there was not sufficient matter to cause an arrest, dictated a letter to Arney addressed to Trie, intreating him to send the whole work entire. In reply Trie wrote as follows.

*Tric's second Letter to Arney.*

'SIR, MY COUSIN,

When I wrote you the letter which you communicated to those who were taxed in it with cowardice, I did not think the matter would have gone so far; my sole intention was to remonstrate against the flaming zeal and devotion of those who call themselves pillars of the church, while they suffer such disorder among them, and meanwhile so cruelly persecute those poor christians who desire to follow God in simplicity: and since the example was so notorious, and that I was advertised of it, I thought it gave me a very natural occasion to mention it in my letters in the manner I have done; but since you have published what I only wrote you privately, God grant for the best, that it may tend to purge christianity from such ordures; considering what deadly plagues they are, if they are so much inclined to be employed this way as you say, the thing does not appear to me to be very different, although for the present you cannot furnish them with that which they desire, viz. the printed book. But I shall put into your hands more than enough to convict him, viz. two dozen of pieces written by the person in

question, where a part of his heresies are contained ; if he is confronted with the printed book he may deny it, that which he cannot do with his own hand writing. And so the people you mention, having the thing fully proved, can have no excuse if they dissemble or delay taking proper measures any longer. As for the rest, the large book, as also the other treatise, written with the author's hand, are here ; but I must confess one thing to you, that I had a great deal of trouble to get what I sent you out of Mr. Calvin's hands, not that he does not desire, that such execrable heresies should be suppressed, but because he thinks that as he does not bear the sword of justice, his duty consists rather in exposing heresies by doctrine, than persecuting them by such means. But I have importuned him so much, remonstrating to him the reproach of levity which I should certainly incur, if he did not give me his assistance : at last he agreed to give me what you see ; besides this, I hope when the cause shall be in a better train, to recover in time about a quire of that very paper which the gentleman has caused to be printed. But for the present I think you sufficiently furnished with good materials, and you will find no difficulty of having more than enough for seizing his person, and commencing

his process. As for myself, I pray God that he would open the eyes of those who speak so wickedly, in order to learn to judge more favorably of the inclination which moves us. As for the part of your letter wherein it appears, that you are not willing to enter any further upon the subject of our former correspondence; I shall endeavor likewise, not to give you any trouble on that head, hoping that God at last will make you sensible, that I have not taken this step rashly; recommending myself to your favor, and praying to God to keep you in his. Geneva, March the 26th.'

Trie wrote a third time to his cousin on this business.

*Trie's third Letter to Arney,*

'SIR, MY COUSIN,

I hope that I shall have satisfied you in part, as to what you have asked me, sending you the hand writing of him who has composed the book, and in the last of those letters which you have received, you will find that he has confessed his name, which he had disguised, but he excuses himself in calling himself Villeneuve, since that his name is Servetus, alias Reeves, saying that he took his name from

the city where he was born ; besides, if it please God, I shall keep to my promise, that if there is any need for it, I shall furnish you with those treatises which he has caused to be printed, and written with his own hand, as well as the letters ; I should have had a great deal of trouble in getting hold of them if they had been in this city, but they have been at Lausanne these two years. If Mr. Calvin had had them, I believe of whatever consequence they were, he would have immediately remitted them to the author. But since he has addressed letters to others also, these have kept them. I have even heard formerly that the aforesaid gentleman (Calvin) having given answers sufficient to content any reasonable man, seeing that he could gain nothing in a work of this kind, he would not condescend to read any more on the subject : as it was already stuffed with stupid fancies and nonsense, while the other did nothing else but repeat always the same song : and that you may know that it is not just now, that this unhappy man has spared no pains to trouble the church, endeavoring to mislead the ignorant with himself, it is more than twenty-four years ago that they have turned him out, and driven him from the principal churches in Germany, and if he had found any place of rest he would never

have left it. Amongst the letters of Oecolampadius, the first and second are addressed to him in a title which very properly belongs to him, *Serveto Hispano neganti christum esse Dei filium, consubstantialem Patri*; Melancthon talks of him in some passages likewise, but I think that you have a very easy proof from what I have sent you, to proceed farther, at least for a beginning. As to the printer, I have not told you the marks whereby we understand that it was Balthazard Arnoullet, and William Gueroult his brother-in-law; but there is sufficient proofs to confirm it, and indeed he cannot deny it; very possibly this will be at the author's charge, and that he will take all the copies into his own hand, but you will find that the impression is come from the shop that I have mentioned. As to what the messenger desires to be dispatched immediately, having delivered me your letters very late, for fear I suppose, that I should answer you to the purpose; wherefore I desire you will excuse my hurry. I believe I forgot to write to you, that after you shall have used the letters, you will not suffer them to be scattered, that they may be returned to me: and here I shall make an end at present, always recommending myself to your kind favor, without forgetting my cousin your brother, being glad that God

has blessed him with an offspring, as you write to me. May God by his holy spirit direct you to do what is agreeable to him. From Geneva the last of March.'

From these letters it is manifest Calvin was the cause of the persecution of Servetus at Vienne; who else could enable Trie to communicate the information contained in his first letter? who else could furnish the sheet of the Doctor's book which accompanied it? It is evident he enabled Trie to communicate the materials for Servetus' condemnation. As to Trie's representing, that Calvin gave up the letters, &c. with reluctance, there seems some art and management in this to save the reformer from the reproach of betraying the Doctor into the hands of the common enemies of all protestants. Servetus complained upon his trial at Geneva that Calvin had sent those papers to Lyons, which caused his arrest and prosecution. Servetus' letters to Calvin were mentioned in the sentence pronounced against him at Vienne.

Calvin endeavored to get rid of the reproach of assisting the papists in the prosecution of the Doctor for heresy. But he never could plainly deny that he had given the papists information,



either directly or indirectly, that Servetus was a heretic, nor that he furnished the materials which enabled them to proceed against him.

Calvin openly confessed that *he* caused Servetus to be apprehended at Geneva, and that *he* employed La Fontaine to prosecute him for heresy. His words are 'I profess, before all the world, that I engaged one to be his accuser.' From first to last he appears to have been the prime mover of the persecution to which the Doctor was subjected, and to have done all in his power to procure his conviction: and it will be found, in the sequel, that he afterwards attempted to defend this cruel persecution.

It appears Calvin's pride was mortified by the firm opposition Servetus made to his dogmas: he wanted him to submit to his dictates. This is evident from the following passage. 'This I will only give my word for at present (says Calvin) that I was not so mortally enraged against him, but that had he not been lost to all sense, it was in his power to have saved his life, by his modesty alone. Nor do I know what to say, unless it be this, that he precipitated himself to his end by his own fatal madness.' Had the Doctor possessed the good sense to compliment Calvin with the title of *eminent servant of*

*Jesus Christ*, and the modesty to have acknowledged that he had been totally wrong, whenever he had contradicted the assertions of that great man, that he heartily disavowed those opinions which *he* pronounced erroneous, and humbly submitted himself to *him*, he might, perhaps, have saved his life: as he could not bring himself to do this, but continued so fatally mad as to maintain doctrines which that reformer condemned, because he was still persuaded of their truth, and refused to pay him any homage, he precipitated himself to his end! It seems there was no way for him to save his life but by forfeiting his integrity, and degrading himself by a mean servility. Valentinus Gentilis, it may be supposed, according to Calvin's views, had more sense and modesty than Servetus; for being imprisoned at Geneva, in 1558, for heresy, at the suit of that reformer, he called him *an excellent servant of God, and a great divine*: and was merely banished. When the champions for reputed orthodoxy, rob us of our liberty, and actually endanger our lives, it is asking too much to require we should compliment them with the title of men of eminent piety, and flatter them with an enumeration of their excellent qualities. For those who usurp dominion over

conscience, and expect every body to give implicit credit to their dogmas and be subject to their assumed authority, to complain that those who oppose them want modesty, however it may agree with their general character, is certainly very preposterous. Had the pope of Rome been enquired of, he would no doubt have said that Calvin, and all the reformers, wanted modesty when they dared to question the authority of the catholic church over them.

## SECTION II.

*Servetus is arrested at Vienne, makes his escape, is burnt in effigy with his books, goes to Geneva, is arrested there.*

In consequence of William Trie's letters, Dr. Servetus was arrested, on the 4th of April, at Vienne. The Vice Bailiff followed him to the house of a sick gentleman, whom he was attending. He told him there were a great many sick and wounded prisoners in the palace of Dauphine, and begged of him to go along with him and visit them. Servetus consented, and while he was making his visits, the Vice Bailiff sent to the Grand Vicar, desiring he would come and join them. When he arrived, they informed

the Doctor that he was their prisoner, and had to answer to the charges and informations laid against him. They ordered the jailor to use him civilly according to his rank. They left him his valet, called Benedict Perrin, a youth of fifteen, who had been five years in his service. That day his friends had the liberty of seeing him. The two next days he was interrogated. After the second examination, Servetus sent Perrin to the monastery of St. Peter, to ask the Grand Prior if he had brought him the three hundred crowns due to him from St. Andrews, and the Grand Prior came and delivered him the said sum. There was in the prison a garden with a platform, which looked towards the court of justice in the palace; above this platform was a hogsty, whereby one could get down to the corner of the wall, and thence get into the court. Although the garden was always kept shut, yet sometimes prisoners above the common rank were allowed the freedom of it. On the 7th of April, Servetus rose at four o'clock in the morning, and asked leave of the jailor to walk in the garden. The man observing that he had a cap on his head, and was wrapped in his night gown, gave him the key,

and soon after went with his servants to work in his vineyard.

As soon as the Doctor thought they were at a proper distance, he left his black velvet cap, and his furred night gown, at the foot of a tree, and putting on a hat, which he had concealed under his gown, he jumped from the terrace, got into the court, quickly passed the gate of the bridge of the Rhone, and escaped.

His flight was not known till more than two hours had elapsed. Orders were dispatched every where to apprehend him ; but he could not be found. However all his effects were seized. The process having been begun before his departure, was carried on in his absence, and, on the seventeenth of June, he was condemned to be burnt alive in a slow fire. The following is the sentence pronounced against him.

‘ Between the Procurator of the King Dauphin, pursuer for the crime of scandalous heresy, dogmatisation, composition of new doctrines, of heretical books, sedition, schism, disturbance of union and public peace, rebellion and disobedience to the ordinances made against heresies, breaking and escaping from the royal Dauphinal prisons on the one part, and Mr.

Michael de Villeneuve, physician, formerly detained prisoner in the prison of the Dauphinal palace of Vienne, and at present a fugitive accused of the aforesaid crimes, on the other part.'

'Having seen the pieces vindicating the said heresies, and even the letters and writings of the said Villeneuve, addressed to Mr. John Calvin, preacher at Geneva, acknowledged by the said Villeneuve, his answers, confessions, and denials; the answers and other procedures concerning Balthazard Arnoullet, printer; certain bales and printed books, entitled, *Christianismi Restitutio*; the witnesses examined upon the said Villeneuve's having composed, and caused to be printed, the said book at his own charge; the reports of the Doctors of Divinity and other notable persons upon the errors contained in the said book and epistles; which errors and heresies are evident from the bare reading of them; acts made upon the said Villeneuve's escaping from prison, and diligence used to apprehend him; adjournment for three days, and defaults obtained upon them; re-examination of witnesses, definitive conclusions of the said Procurator of the Dauphin King, and every other thing which has been

remitted to us; the whole being considered, we have declared, and do declare, the said defaults to have been well and duly obtained; for the confirmation whereof, we have debarred, and hereby do debar the said Villeneuve, from all exceptions and defences, declared, and do declare that he is attainted and convicted of the crimes laid to his charge; for reparation whereof, we have condemned, and do condemn him as to a pecuniary fine, to pay the sum of a thousand livres tournois of fine to the Dauphin King: and immediately upon his being apprehended, he shall be carried upon a dung-cart together with his books, the first opportunity, from the market at the gate of the Dauphinal palace, through the several streets and customary places, to the place of the hall of the said city, and then to the place called Charneve, and there to be burned alive at a slow fire, until his body be reduced to ashes. And in the mean time the present sentence shall be executed in effigy, with which the said books shall be burned. And we have condemned, and do condemn him to pay all expence and charges of process, the tax whereof we reserve, declaring all and every part of his goods forfeited, and confiscated to the profit of whom it may appertain, the said expence of justice and fine being preferably

delivered and paid out of the said goods. De la Court Vice Bailiff, and Judge Dauphinal, Greater assessor, Carier assessor, Pietod assessor, Duprat assessor, A de Bais assessor, Beraud assessor, Philip Morel assessor, Dampstefieu assessor, Pertier assessor, De Court assessor, Loys Merd assessor, Christofle assessor; the said sentence published in open court, and hearing of the said Procurator, of the King of Dauphine. We, the Vice Bailiff and Judge of the said session in the hall of the Dauphinal palace of Vienne, the seventeenth day of the month of June, one thousand five hundred and fifty three years. Present Mess. Phillebert Gollin, Alexander Rolland, Claude Magnin, Charles Verdeny, Peter de Vignes, and a great many other persons of quality of Vienne, being present there, and I the underwritten.

*Chasalis.*

'The same day about noon, after the effigy was brought before the Dauphinal palace, the said effigy was put upon a dung-cart by Francis Berode, executioner of justice, who was sent for on that account, together with five bales of books composed by the said Villeneuve, and when the effigy and books were just upon the



said cart, it was conducted and led by the said executioner, from the gate of the palace through the streets and accustomed places, to the hall of the present city of Vienne, and then to the place called Charneve, where the said effigy was fixed to a gibbet erected for that purpose, and afterwards burned in a slow fire by the said executioner, who has fully and entirely executed the said sentence with regard to the said effigy, according to the form and tenor thereof; in presence of Guignes Ambrosin, common crier and trumpeter of Vienne, Claude Reymet, Michael Basset, catchpoles of the King of Dauphine, Sermet des Champs, Boleñger of Vienne, and a great many other persons assembled to see the sentence put in execution. Thus has it been conducted, attested, and signed by me.

*Secretary Chasalis.'*

The sentence of the ecclesiastical Judges was not pronounced till six months after that of the Vice Bailiff, i. e. Saturday the 23rd of December, 1553. It declared 'Michael de Villeneuve a heretic, accused on account of heresy, composing and printing *Christianismi Restitutio*; his goods confiscated for the benefit of the courts of Vienne, deducting the expense of justice; ordaining besides, that all the

books of the said Villeneuve, which can be found, shall be burned.'

Four months Servetus concealed himself nobody knows where. At length he resolved to go to Naples, and to practise physic there. He took the way of Geneva, and arrived there on foot. How long he was there before he was arrested is uncertain; but it is natural to suppose he would not choose to stay long in a place where he knew his greatest adversary resided, and had great influence: and while there he kept himself very close. How Calvin learned that the Doctor was in Geneva we are not told; but so soon as he knew that he was in that city, he prevailed on the chief Syndic to cause him to be put in prison. There were found upon him ninety-seven pieces of gold, a gold chain, which weighed about twenty crowns, and six gold rings. Of these he was robbed. They were delivered to the jailor, and he never recovered them. What right had his persecutors to seize his property as if he had been a common thief? Did they apply it to defray the expenses of their murderous proceedings against him?

It being requisite that some person should prosecute Servetus, in order to bring him to his

trial, one *Nicolas de la Fontaine* set up for his accuser. Some writers say this man had been Calvin's cook or valet, however this might be, it seems he was an inmate with him, and acted under his direction. A respectable writer says 'Whether Calvin's cook was capable of giving any judgment of Servetus errors about the trinity, about the doctrine of fate, and about the most obscure questions of that kind, (in the discussion of which the church has been for so many ages hitherto fatigued,) and should throw the first stone at him; or whether he ought not to be liable to the same punishment as a false witness, is left to the judgment of those who were acquainted with the ignorance of the man. Again, whether it is not very inconsistent with the character of a pastor of the church of Christ, to entice a servant that belongs to his kitchen, to act the part of an accuser in a capital crime; let them judge, who know the dispositions of the apostles? But that cook was not his real accuser, only one that personated an accuser; that the magistracy being imposed on by that fallacy, might suffer Calvin, who was the real accuser, to carry on the whole cause against Servetus, a piece of conduct, which Calvin would have censured as unjust, according to the laws of the city, had he been himself

in prison.' It is more likely La Fontaine was a poor scholar, and a kind of domestic servant to Calvin. Servetus says expressly, in one of his petitions to the magistrates, that Calvin was his master.'

The arrest of Servetus at Geneva, was a gross violation of justice and hospitality, to say nothing of the principles of christianity. He was neither a member of Calvin's church, nor a subject of the Genevese state; consequently he could not be accountable to either the civil or ecclesiastical power in that city. He had published no book, nor committed any act of which the law could take cognizance, on the territory of the republic; it follows that, even allowing him to be a heretic, and heresy to be a capital crime, it was contrary to every rule of justice for the magistrates of Geneva to arrest him. To seize the traveller who merely stays to refresh his weary body at an inn in their city, is most inhospitable. Was this their christian entertainment of strangers, to cast them into a damp prison as soon as they found them on their territory? Were these their bowels and mercies to a persecuted brother, who had narrowly escaped being burnt alive, in a slow fire, by the antichristian church of Rome? Was

this their cup of cold water to a disciple of Jesus, in the day of his adversity? Was Geneva reformed for no other purpose than to intercept those who fled from the merciless fury of popish persecutors, to be a harbor of unsocial bigots, lordly usurpers of dominion over conscience? Poor Servetus! thou didst escape from the jaws of the lion, but it was only to fall into the paws of the bear! It will be seen in the sequel, that the treatment of the Doctor in the prison of Geneva was far more brutal than that he received in the prison at Vienne. In the latter he was treated like a gentleman, but in the former, it will be seen, he was treated with rudeness and barbarity.

Calvin ought to have been the last man in the world to call for the arrest of Servetus, and to promote a criminal prosecution against him. He could not do it without raising a suspicion that his own doctrines could not be supported by scripture and argument, without the aid of penal laws, and persecuting measures, the props of papal superstition. He could not do it without laying himself open to the suspicion of acting, under the influence of the base principle of personal revenge, on account of the personal altercation he had been engaged in with the the Doctor. As he regarded Servetus in the

light of an enemy, he had a fine opportunity of doing honor to his own cause, and of showing the influence of the gospel upon his mind; by manifesting to him the spirit of christian charity, receiving him with hospitality, protecting him from harm, guaranteeing to him his liberty and safety, and rejoicing in his escape from the fangs of persecution; but letting so glorious an opportunity slip, of doing honor to christianity, and his own system in particular, he disgraced the christian name, and rendered it impossible for any one to call himself a calvinist without taking a deliberate murderer for his leader. Ah *calvinism*! thou derivest thy name from a man stained with the blood of his christian brother, who differed from him in opinion.

### SECTION III.

#### *The Trial of Servetus.*

Servetus was brought to the bar, the first time on the 14th of August, La Fontaine demanded that he should answer thirty-eight interrogatories. Most of those interrogatories concerned his opinions. The reader will find in another section the propositions for which he was committed to the flames. Servetus

confessed, that he had published in Germany, a book entitled, *De Trinitatis Erroribus*. He also confessed that he was the author of the *Christianismi Restitutio*. He acknowledged that he had written some annotations on the bible and upon Ptolemy's geography.

The thirty seventh interrogatory was expressed in these words: 'Likewise, that in the person of Mr. Calvin, minister of the word of God in this church of Geneva, he had defamed in a printed book, the doctrine that is preached, uttering all the injurious and blasphemous words that can be invented.'

Servetus answered to this, 'That Mr. Calvin did abuse him before in several printed books, and that he answered him (in the same manner) and showed that he was in the wrong in some passages; and that when the said Calvin wrote to him, that he was of opinion, that he wrote the same in his turn, and that the same Calvin was mistaken in a great many points.'

'It looks very strange (says the author of the history of Servetus) that such passages as these should make any part of an indictment in a capital cause; what, could not a *Spaniard*, a *German*, or a *Polonian*, that had happened to have writ any thing contrary to the tenets preached in *Geneva*, take up his lodging for

a night or two in that city, but he must be presently apprehended? No, not if it be Servetus, and that Servetus too, who, *in the person of Mr. CALVIN*, minister of the word of God in the church of *Geneva*, had, in a printed book, defamed the doctrine that is preached: Alas! Servetus had irritated that great man too much; and pope Calvin was resolved to have his blood, even though he was conscious to himself, that he had treated Servetus as rudely as Servetus had done him; nay, that he had given the first provocation that way.'

When Servetus had answered the thirty-eight interrogatories, his accuser produced against him a manuscript and a printed book. The prisoner confessed that he was the author of both, and that he had published the printed book; but he said the manuscript had not been printed, and that he had only sent it to Calvin about six years before, to have his judgment about it. La Fontaine produced a printed copy of Ptolemy, with notes, and a latin bible with several annotations. Servetus confessed that he was the author of the notes upon Ptolemy, and that he had written some of those annotations upon the bible. Afterwards La Fontaine made himself a prisoner, the better to convince the judges, that he was able to prove the accusation.—



Servetus declared, that he had delivered to the jailor, the ninety seven gold pieces, the gold chain, and the rings before mentioned.

The next day (August 15.) Servetus was brought a second time to the bar, and answered again the same interrogatories as before. Upon the fourth, he said, that Mr. Calvin did so violently persecute him, that he narrowly escaped being burnt alive by his means. Servetus answered to the thirty-seventh head of accusation, That Calvin abused him first, at several times and afterwards in printed books; and that what he had written to him in his own vindication, was not with an intent to abuse him, but to show him his mistakes and errors, as he engages to do in a full congregation, by solid arguments, and by the holy scriptures.

Servetus having answered all the articles, the judges came to this resolution, That because he appeared to be very guilty, La Fontaine should be released upon promise of going on with the prosecution. Servetus confessed some of these articles, and denied the rest as he had done the day before.

The next day (August 16.) the prisoner was brought again to the bar. La Fontaine came in with another person, named Germain Colladon; and upon the third article, produced again

a copy of Ptolemy, and the notes inserted by the author, at the end of the description of Palestine. Some passages also were produced out of Servetus' works, to convict him of the heresies charged upon him; but they went no farther than the eleventh article, before the court adjourned the continuance of their proceedings to the next day. In the mean time La Fontaine presented the following petition to the judges.

'Magnificent, mighty, and most dreadful Lords, Nicholas de la Fontaine, humbly sheweth, That having made himself a prisoner in a criminal cause, against Michael Servetus, for the great scandals and troubles occasioned in Christendom by the said Servetus, during the space of twenty-four years, or thereabouts, for the blasphemies uttered and published by him against God, for the heresies wherewith he has infected the world, for the wicked calumnies and defamations he has published against the eminent servants of God, especially against *Mr. Calvin*, whose honor the said petitioner is bound to maintain, as of one who is his pastor, if he is willing to be accounted a christian; and also by reason of the dishonor that might accrue from it to the church of Geneva, foras-

much as the said Servetus does particularly condemn the doctrine that is preached in it, &c.'

In the remaining part of the petition, the accuser beseeches the judges to compel Servetus to make a formal answer to each article produced against him, without any shift; and that after he has been convicted of publishing and teaching the heresies contained in the interrogatories, if they judge him to be guilty, and to deserve to be prosecuted by their attorney, they would be pleased to make a declaration of it, and to clear him from all damages and expenses according to custom. This petition of De la Fontaine was attended with the thirty-eight articles before mentioned.

In this proceeding, two things are observable, First, that the offence Servetus had given to John Calvin was one of the great crimes charged upon him, and supposed equal to blasphemy against God. Second, that the Genevese were strangers to that excellent maxim of our law, that no man shall be compelled to answer questions that would criminate himself.

The next day (August 17.) Servetus made his appearance in court again, where proof was to be produced that he had abused Calvin and some other divines of Geneva; for it seems this was the Doctor's heresy and blasphemy, the

abuse of the great Calvin and his colleagues, who were pleased to construe into abuse every thing written in opposition to their opinions.

To prove the first article, importing that Servetus had been condemned in Germany, La Fontaine and Colladon, exhibited two letters of Oecolampadius, and two passages of Melancthon. The first passage of Melancthon runs thus.

‘ That fanatic, Servetus, plays with the word *persona*, and contends, that anciently among the Latins it was used to signify the habit or distinction of some office; as much as to say, that at one time *Roscius* personated *Achilles*, at another *Ulysses*; or that the same man is one time a consul, and another a servant, as *Cicero* expresses himself. It is of the greatest importance, in the commonwealth, for a prince to keep his rank: and Servetus villanously wrests this old signification of the word, to explain the article of three persons in the divinity.’ Supposing Servetus to have misapplied the term, would that have constituted him a villain?

In the second passage Melancthon calls Servetus, *a sly and impious fellow*. He acknowledged that Oecolampadius and Melancthon

had written against him; and added, that *it was not a definitive sentence*. Had he actually been condemned, in the most formal way, by the aforesaid divines, would that be any reason why he should be condemned and burnt alive at Geneva? That would be to carry decision by mere precedent to a most destructive length.

Upon the third article the two accusers again produced Ptolemy's geography, and a passage out of Servetus' preface, wherein he says, that the fruitfulness of *Judea* had been wrongfully cried up, since those, who travelled in it, tell us, that it is a barren and poor country. When Ptolemy's geography (says Calvin) published with Servetus' preface was produced, in which his readers are apprized, that it was downright vanity to ascribe such great plenty to *Judea*; because, by the report of merchants, who have travelled thither, they found it uncultivated, barren, and destitute of all manner of pleasantness; he fell a mumbling, and replied, that this was written by another hand. Such a sorry pretence was soon baffled; for by his shuffling after this manner, the impostor appeared barefaced; and being reduced to his last shifts, he then maintained that the remark was just. Upon his being asked, who that vain panegyrist upon *Judea* should be, if it was not

*Moses* ? He replied as if nobody else had given the history of *Judea* but he. Here I thought it necessary to make this answer, that those who had given an account of that country, followed *Moses*, the most ancient writer who mentions it; wherefore it was a very great fault in him to deceive those who followed him in that particular; for whose account was that, that *Judea* was a land flowing with milk and honey? Besides, I urged further, that it was preposterous to form a judgment of what that land was anciently, from what it appears to be now; for we ought to remember that dreadful judgment of God, with which he had threatened *Judea*, in a particular manner, and that which is in general described in Psalm 107. That it is God who turneth a fruitful land into barrenness, for the wickedness of them that dwell therein, is particularly verified in *Judea*, which, to this day is a signal mirror of divine vengeance.' Upon this, Calvin, worked up to a degree of passion, proceeds thus; 'It would appear utterly incredible, were it not that our illustrious senate, together with many other grave men, were witnesses of it; that when he stood so plainly convicted of this his impiety, that he had nothing to alledge in his vindica-

tion, that obscene dog, with the utmost impudence, asserted, in one word, that there was no harm in what he had said.' What impudence and impiety to refuse submission to the dictates of such a man as Calvin !

Thus it appears (as the author of the *Bibliothèque Angloise* observes) that the third article was supported simply by a passage in Ptolemy's geography, which Servetus said he had no hand in, and that nevertheless there was no evil in it, and that he did not intend the time of *Moses*, but the modern writers concerning that country ; whereas they urged, that forasmuch as the passage comprised all who have written about that country in general, it was a calumnious reflection upon *Moses*. 'Let the reader judge of the force of this argument,' says the above author.

On the same day they produced against him his notes on the vii. and viii. chapters of *Isaiah* ; particularly those he had made on liii. chapter of that prophet, which he understood in a literal sense of *Cyrus*, who (said he) died for the sins of the *Jews* ; adding, that the mystical sense concerned Jesus Christ, who is principally meant in that chapter ; and that the ancient doctors have put two senses upon the old Tes-

tament, i. e. the one the literal, the other the mystical.

After Calvin had said that Servetus had corrupted the bible he was hired to correct at *Lyons*, partly with impertinent and trifling, and partly with impiously whimsical notes of his own, throughout every page; he adds, 'Since it would have been endless to have examined all these notes of Servetus; those upon the liii. of *Isaiah* were principally objected to him, though the clearness of the passages in that chapter should have cut off all pretensions from the impudent *Jews*, of calumniating christianity; yet this impostor has dared to give such a wrong turn to them, as to interpret them of *Cyrus*: so that whatever the prophet has, with great perspicuity, and with the utmost force of expression, discoursed concerning the one only sacrifice, the eternal expiation procured by it, the reconciliation of the world to God, and gratuitous righteousness by faith, this perfidious villain has blotted out. For to these words of the prophet; 'surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows; he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement of our peace was laid upon him, and with his stripes we are healed.' he hath tacked a comment worthy of Servetus, i. e.



That the prophet bewails the death of *Cyrus*, which was owing to the sins of the people. Servetus adds after indeed, that Christ was shadowed under these expressions, to whom alone they properly agree. But at the same time he mentions nothing of satisfaction for our sins, of the remedy by which God is rendered propitious to us, or of any expiation left for us. His vile corruption of this famous prophecy, could arise from no other spring than the mad and furious pleasure he takes of destroying the faith; and being utterly regardless of all modesty, he would rather take the highest reproach upon himself, than not to pervert every thing that has been said by any other paraphrast. I pass by his maintaining, that *Nicolas de Lyra* had explained the same chapter as he did; and that when upon the book being produced, he was convicted of a lie, did not so much as blush; for it was a common practice with him with much assurance, to make quotations out of books which he had never looked into; a merry instance of which turned up about *Justin Martyr*: for since he had boasted very much, that the fables of the p—s—ns in the t—i—y were unknown in his golden age; I ordered his book to be immediately produced, and plainly showed him some express places, wherein that

holy man had as clearly asserted our faith, as if he had written it at our request; but he was no more able to read *greek*, than a boy that has just begun his alphabet, when he perceived himself thus shamefully caught, he, with great indignation, called for a *latin* translation.—What's the meaning of this said I? There is no *latin* translation extant; don't you, who pretend to be so conversant with the writings of *Justin Martyr*, understand the *greek* tongue? whence had you the several quotations you have so often made from him? He, as his custom was, made an impudent digression, without the least sign of shame: and when it was evidently made appear, that that chapter, which principally concerns our salvation, by expiation made for the sins of men, by the death of Christ, was rased out of the book of *Isaiah*, by his diabolical fraud, he discovered the monstrous malice of his mind, by his having no manner of remorse upon that account: and I persuade myself, that as his inward, deliberate, and long digested impiety, manifested itself to me, by the pleasure he took in throwing all things into confusion, so it will to all good men.'

The enmity and foulmouthed abuse vented in the above passage against Servetus, will lead the impartial reader to conclude that the state-

ment which the writer gives of facts cannot be deserving of implicit credit. His mind was too much heated, and his prejudice too strong, for him to represent the transactions with impartiality. His design was evidently to blacken the character of Servetus as much as possible: so that he could but do this he seems not to have been nice about the means. *Grotius* applies the liii. of *Isaiah* to *Jeremiah*, which most will think as great a mistake as that of Servetus, yet who ever thought of charging him with impudence and impiety on that account? The author of the *Bibliothèque Angloise* declares himself sure that Calvin's assertion, that Servetus could not read *greek*, is not well grounded.

The next book produced against the prisoner, was his *Christianismi Restitutio*, particularly from the 22nd page to the 35th and 36th, where he calls the trinity a dream of *St Austin*, giving those the name of Tritheists, who believe in the trinity. Servetus in his vindication answered, That he did not call those who believed the trinity, Tritheists, for he himself believed it; but only those who misrepresented it, admitting a real distinction in the divine essence; that they divided God, and destroyed the unity of the divine nature, and those he called Trinitarians and Atheists; and that there is a personal and not a real dis-

tion in the true trinity. He added, that his doctrine was the same with that of the disciples of the apostles and the primitive fathers; such as *St. Ignatius*, *St. Polycarp*, *St. Irenæus*, *Clemens*, *Alexandrinus*, and *Tertullian*, whom he had quoted in his book.

He further said that by the word person, or *hypostasis*, he understood a visible or apparent subsistence.

On the same day his accusers produced several other passages out of his printed and manuscript books, to prove the heresies charged upon him. It is observable, that every time he was brought to the bar, they seldom failed to insist on his having abused Calvin. In order to make out this important accusation, they produced his *Christianismi Restitutio*, a latin letter which he had written to *Abel Pepin*, and a copy of Calvin's institutes, full of marginal notes, written with Servetus' own hand. Servetus declared, on the same day, that his printer had sent several copies of his *Christianismi Restitutio* to *Frankfort*.

On the 21st of August, La Fontaine and Colladon exhibited a letter of *Belthazar Arnoullet*, who printed Servetus' book, and had been imprisoned with him at Vicnne. That letter was written from that city, July 14,

much as the said Servetus does particularly condemn the doctrine that is preached in it, &c.'

In the remaining part of the petition, the accuser beseeches the judges to compel Servetus to make a formal answer to each article produced against him, without any shift; and that after he has been convicted of publishing and teaching the heresies contained in the interrogatories, if they judge him to be guilty, and to deserve to be prosecuted by their attorney, they would be pleased to make a declaration of it, and to clear him from all damages and expenses according to custom. This petition of De la Fontaine was attended with the thirty-eight articles before mentioned.

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nal, agreeably to the doctrine of the apostles and their disciples, and of the ancient church, who never admitted any such accusation.

‘Secondly, my Lords, the petitioner beseeches you to consider, that he has committed no fault in your city, nor any where else ; that he has not been a seditious man, nor a disturber of the public peace ; (for the matters treated of by him are difficult, and such as can only be understood by learned men) that all the time he was in Germany, he never discoursed of those things but with *Oecolampadius*, *Bucer*, and *Capito*, and that he never imparted his opinions to any body in France ; besides, he always disapproved, and continues to disapprove of the anabaptists, who oppose the magistrates, and would have all things to be in common.— Wherefore he concludes, that he ought not to be prosecuted as a criminal, for setting forth some questions debated by the doctors of the ancient church, since he hath done it without acting like a seditious man.’

‘Thirdly, my Lords, because he is a foreigner, wholly unacquainted with the customs of this country, and knows not how to speak and proceed in his trial, he humbly beseeches you to give him an attorney, who may speak for

him, it will be well done, and the Lord will prosper your Republic.

*Michael Servetus of Villaneuve, pleading his own cause.*

Every impartial person must admit that the requests, contained in the above petition, were perfectly just, yet they were made in vain, as will be seen in the sequel.

On the 23rd of August, the Attorney General, exhibited thirty new articles against him, upon which he required that Servetus should be interrogated; the most part of these regarded his person, his manners, and his conduct, and which to say the truth, had no connexion with the affair in hand. Among other things, in his answers he said: That it was about four or five and twenty years ago he left his own country, and he had not returned thither since. That his parents were not of jewish, but of christian extraction, and lived nobly. That he had studied physic at Paris, and read mathematical lectures in public: that he having his degrees, and some knowledge in physic, did always practice in that faculty; having no other profession, except it was at Lyons, where he was a short time corrector of the press. That he published his last book with a good inten-



tion, following the dictates of his conscience. That he was not come to Geneva with a design to stay in that city. That he told his landlord and landlady, he intended the next day to set out for Switzerland; and that he did not appear abroad for fear of being discovered.

It was on that day an attempt was made to injure his moral character, but in vain. His judges being of opinion, that so great a heretic must be a great sinner, asked him, whether he had never committed fornication? He answered, that he had never been guilty of that sin. Being further asked how he could contain himself (considering his age, for he was then forty-four years old)? His answer was, that he was impotent through an accident that happened to him in his childhood. But replied his judges, did you not say once, when asked, why you would not marry, that there were women enough to be had without marrying? He answered, that he did not remember that ever he had said any such thing; and that if he had, he spoke it in jest.

On the 28th there appeared thirty-eight new articles, about which the lieutenant desired the prisoner should be examined, and that he should answer each of them affirmatively, or negatively. These articles were preceded by a preamble

designed to show that Servetus deserved death. The Attorney General represented to the judges, that Servetus varied in his answers; that they were full of lies, that he made a mock of God and his word, by alledging, corrupting and wresting the passages of the holy scriptures to conceal his blasphemies, and avoid being punished. He added, that Servetus had made a wrong choice of the examples quoted by him, out of the Acts of the apostles; and that what he had said of the emperor Constantine was false. Besides, he alledged against the prisoner the laws of those emperors, who condemned heretics to death. He further said that Servetus was condemned by his own conscience, and sensible that he deserved death; and that like the anabaptists, he deprived the magistrates of the right of the sword. Lastly, He concluded, that since Servetus knew so well how to tell lies he should not have an attorney, as he desired: that such a thing was forbidden by the civil law, and never granted to such seducers.

The articles upon which he was examined that day, were of the same nature as the thirty, upon which he had already been interrogated, and had no concern with the accusation of he-

resy. Servetus declared the same day, that he persisted in his belief, except they could show him the falsehood of his doctrines.

August the 31st, the Syndics and Council of Geneva received a letter from the Vice Bailiff of Vienne, and the King's Procurator of the same city, dated the 26th, by which they gave them thanks for acquainting them that Servetus had been arrested and imprisoned at Geneva; they desired them to remit back the prisoner, that the sentence pronounced against him might be executed. Their letter was accompanied with a copy of the sentence. This letter was brought by the Viquier or Captain of the royal palace at Vienne.

The same day, Servetus being brought to the bar, the Captain came in, and the judges asked the prisoner if he knew him. He answered yes, and that he had been two days under his guard, &c. Being asked, whether he had rather stay at Geneva, in the hands of the gentlemen of the Council, or return to Vienne with the jailor, who was come to demand him. He threw himself on the ground, melted into tears, and said he wished rather to be judged by the magistrates of Geneva, and that they might do with him whatever they pleased. He further said,

that he had been examined twice at Vienne; that he was asked, whether he had been in Germany? That they showed him some sheets of a manuscript, which he had sent to Calvin, and some letters which he had written to him. He added that he looked upon the mass as a wicked thing, that he had written against it like the protestants, and acknowledged he had acted wrong in having gone to mass at Vienne.

The jailor of Vienne left Geneva, having obtained an attestation, importing that Servetus had declared, that he made his escape from Vienne without his consent.

The 1st of September Servetus generously refused to name those who were in his debt in France, that he might not enrich his enemies, and expose his friends. The judges asked him several questions about it, at the solicitation of the *Sieur de Maugerón*, who wrote a letter, to inform them, that the king had given Servetus' estate to his son. The same day the judges appointed Calvin to extract propositions, word for word, from Servetus' book,

The bare perusal of this outline must convince the candid reader, that Servetus' trial was

conducted in an unjust, vexatious, and most scandalous manner. Caught in the toils of his enemies, he could obtain neither justice nor mercy at their hands. Every method was taken to ensnare, criminate, and destroy him. One thing is very observable, i. e. the correspondence between papists and protestants, and their apparent agreement, and co-operation, in this nefarious business. They seemed for a moment to forget their animosity and hatred of each other, that they might pour out their venom, and direct their mutual vengeance against the persecuted physician. Papists could even thank protestants for their intelligence respecting the proscription of such a reputed heretic. Even protestants were not ashamed to inform the agents of the bloodstained mother of harlots that they had lodged in a gloomy prison, a man whose only crime was, that he dared to differ in his opinions from them both. The reader, perhaps, will remember that, on a very memorable occasion, Herod and Pontius Pilate were made friends.

SECTION IV.

*Articles extracted by Calvin from the books of Michael Servetus, with a view to criminate him, with the Doctor's answer.*

The judges ordered Calvin to extract several propositions, word for word out of Servetus' book, and that Servetus should answer, and prove his doctrine in latin. Pursuant to that order, Calvin went immediately about it, and reduced those propositions to thirty-eight articles. The title prefixed to them runs thus :

*' Sentences or Propositions extracted from the books of MICHAEL SERVETUS, which the Ministers of the church of Geneva, declare to be full of impious blasphemies against God, and of other mad and profane errors, altogether repugnant to the word of God, and the orthodox agreement of the church.'*

1. All those who believe a Trinity in the essence of God, are Tritheists, true Atheists; nor have they any other than a tripartite, and aggregate God, connotative, not absolute;

they have imaginary Gods, and illusions of demons; 30th p. of the first book on the Trinity; to which agrees what he adds in the following page: They are dreams of your own; cast your eyes upon what phantasms are, and you will soon perceive that your Trinity is not intelligible without three phantasms. At length he concludes that all Trinitarians are Atheists.'

'2. He asserts that the *Hebrews* being supported by so many authorities, deservedly wonder at the tripartite Deity that is introduced by us.'

'3. To assert that the incorporeal Deity is really distinct within itself, has given the handle to *Mahomet* to deny Christ.'

'4. That there should be three incorporeal beings, distinct in the unity of God, is utterly inconsistent, and is no other than an imaginary Trinity'

'5. That he may color over his impious opinions, he confesses that there was a personal distinction in God, but understands it of a person only external, that does not truly subsist in the essence of God. He says, that the word was an ideal reason from the beginning, which now relates to him as man; was the exemplar, person, effigies, countenance, face of the future man Jesus Christ, in the word with God; the

representation of man in God. In his first Dialogue likewise, p. 229, he says, that there is no real difference between the word and the spirit; and in his first book of the Trinity, p. 189, that there was in God no real generation or spiration.'

' 6. That it may plainly appear, that the persons are confounded by him, he, in the second book of the Trinity, p. 66, speaks after this manner; The wisdom itself was formerly both the word and the spirit, because there was no real distinction, that very same wisdom was the spirit; and in his 5th book, p. 164, he defines the whole mystery of the word and spirit to have been the effulgent glory of Christ.'

' 7. However, though he denies any real distinction in the three persons, before the incarnation of Christ, yet he says that Christ was invested with so much glory, that he may not only be God himself of God, but that he may be God from whom another God may proceed. p. 185, of his fifth book of the Trinity.'

' 8. Christ himself is the Son of God, not only as begotten by God in the womb of the virgin *Mary*, but because God begot him of his own substance, in p. 11 and 12, of the first



book of the Trinity, and in his epistle to Calvin, 1 and 2.'

'9. That the word of God descending from heaven, is now the flesh of Christ; so as that the flesh of Christ is from heaven, p. 17, 18, of his first book on the Trinity, and in the second, p. 73. The very body of Christ is the very body of the Deity; his flesh is divine, the celestial flesh of God, begotten of the substance of God: and in p. 231, of his first dialogue, the soul of Christ is God, the flesh of Christ is God; and his soul as well as his flesh, were from eternity, in the proper substance of the divinity.'

'10. In the second book of the Trinity, p. 77, he thus expresses himself. The essence of the body and soul of Christ is the Deity of the word and spirit; and Christ was from the beginning, as well in regard to his body, as to his soul; so in p. 87, the substance of the Deity is not only in the soul, but in the body of Christ. So in the 5th book, p. 164, God was the word, and the spirit variously dispensing, word and spirit into body and soul.'

'11. That he may show how he sports himself with the divinity of Christ, he explains himself, by calling it the wisdom and power of God, and the splendor of his glory, even as if

he should be only called some certain wisdom and power; book 2, p. 87.'

'12. The man Christ Jesus was from the beginning with God in his proper person and substance; book 2, p. 90, and yet he attributes to Christ two persons in his 4th book, p. 129.'

'13. After he had acknowledged that the word of God was become man, he says this word was the seed of Christ, in the 4th book of the Trinity, p. 145. That he was likewise something different from the Son, p. 23. That the word also, by whom the world was created, was produced by his favor; from whence it follows, that he himself is not that word. Book 2, of the Trinity, p. 85. And that the word of God was the dew of the natural geniture of Christ in the womb of the virgin, as the seed of generation is in animals, in the second Dialogue of the Trinity, p. 260. Besides, the Son of God was naturally begotten by the holy Spirit through the word. Book 1, of Regeneration, p. 355.'

'14. The word of God itself was the seed of the generation of Christ, as all generating beings conceive in themselves, before they bring forth the foetus; so the seed of the word was in God, before the conception of a Son by *Mary*. Book

4, of the Trinity, p. 146. That the paternal seed of the geniture of Christ effected the very same thing in him, which the created seed of the father does in every one of us. Dial. 2, of the Trinity, p. 254.'

' 15. By the agency of the spirit of God, the body of Christ itself existed ; for by the divine word, as it were the dew of the geniture of Christ, the spirit mingled itself with the created elements of the earth : and since the divine and human breath was sown and nourished together in his soul, the one *Hypostasis* of his spirit became extant, which is the *Hypostasis* of the holy spirit. Book 5, of the Trinity, p. 165. And he had said before, that the three elements in Christ were of the substance of the Father. Book 4, of the Trinity, p. 159.'

' 16. In order to corrupt that saying of the apostle, in the second of the *Hebrews*, viz. That Christ took not on him the nature of angels, but the seed of *Abraham*, he thus expounds it, viz. because he hath delivered us from death. Book 2, of the Trinity, p. 90.'

' 17. That God is the Father of the holy spirit ; the purport of which is nothing less than to confound the persons, even such persons as he himself feigns them to be. Book 5, of the Trinity, p. 187.

¶ 18. To show how he plays with the word person, he says, that was one only personal image, or face, which was the person of Christ in God, communicated also to the angels. Book 3, of the Trinity, p. 102.'

' 19. As there are in us three elements from each parent, so there are in Christ; but the earthly matter is only from the mother, as in Christ, so in mankind in general; whence it follows, that he had not a body like ours, which in consequence is to rase out our redemption. Dial. 2, of the Trinity, p. 250, which he more fully expresses in book 5, of the Trinity, p. 194; where he says, that there are only created elements in us, but in Christ there are both created, and increated; and that the substance of the spirit of God is substantially communicated to his flesh.'

' 20. That the celestial dew over-shadowing the virgin, and mingling itself with her semen and blood, transforms the human matter into God. Dial. 2, of the Trinity, p. 263.'

' 21. Confounding the natures, he says, that the created, and increated light were in Christ one light; and that from the divine spirit, and human soul, one substantial soul was constituted in Christ; and thus the substance of flesh, and the substance of the word, are one sub-

stance, as in the following page. At last he concludes, that the flesh of Christ had the substance of the word bodily ; that substantial, vital, divine spirit itself, and so it is truly celestial, and of the substance of God, the flesh of the word, the flesh of God, which hath an eternal existence. Dial. 2, of the Trinity, p. 271.'

' 22. That Jesus Christ partaking both of God and man, could not be said to be a creature, but a partaker of creatures. Dial. 2, of the Trinity, p. 272.'

' 23. That one and the same Deity, which is in the Father, was communicated immediately and bodily to his Son Jesus Christ. Thence, he being mediator, it was communicated by the ministry of the angelic spirits to the apostles spiritually ; but that the Deity was implanted bodily and spiritually by nature in Christ only ; but a holy and substantial breathing is given by him to others. Book 2, of the Trinity, p. 22.'

' 24. As the word descended into the flesh of Christ, so the holy spirit descended into the souls of the apostles. Dial. 2, p. 264.'

' 25. Confounding the persons, he says thus, that the *Logos*, or word, was naturally and voluntarily the ideal reason and manifestation, the resplendence of Christ with God ; the spirit

of Christ with God, his light with God; from whence it follows it was no substance, but only the figure of what did not then exist, and at the same time does not differ from the spirit. Dial. of the Trinity. p. 208.'

'26. That there was no visible *Hypostasis* of the spirit before the coming of Christ; from whence it follows, that there was then no *Hypostasis*, nor person, since that is no person that is not visible, as he asserts in his books, and confesses by his answers; to which agrees what he says in his first Dialogue, viz. that the spirit of God was the shadow in the creation of the world.'

'27. That we may know what kind of eternity he allows to Christ: As (says he) all things are now in God, so they were in the same order in him before the creation, and Christ first before all things in him. Likewise that God eternally discerning, by his own eternal reason, his Son to be corporeal, and visible to himself, exhibits himself visible, by the substance of the like species, through the word.'

'28. Christ, as long as he conversed in mortal flesh, had not then, as yet, received that new spirit, which he was to receive from his resurrection. That Christ before his resurrection, had not obtained the whole glory of God, but

did receive the new spirit afterwards. That now therefore Christ alone contains, hypostatically, the glory of the word, and of the spirit, to which agrees what he writes in his first Dialogue; That God breathing, breathed into Christ, as into us, the holy spirit coming upon him. And by another dispensation, he inspired him, at last, with the whole Deity, and renewed his former spirit in the resurrection; a new spirit being given, whom the spirit given in *Jordan* did prefigure.'

'29. That in the substance of God there are parts and partitions, not in the same manner as there are in creatures, but according to the distribution of the dispensation; in such manner, that in the partition of the spirit, every portion is God. Besides, when he asserts, that our spirits were substantially from eternity, he adds, that they are consubstantial, and co-eternal; and yet in another place he grants, that the spirit, by which we are illuminated, may be extinguished.'

'30. That the spirit of the Deity was implanted in all of us, from the beginning, by the breath of God.'

'31. Whenever the spirit of God is said to be in any one under the law, it is not to be understood of the holy spirit of regeneration.'

‘ 32. That angels were formerly adored as gods by the *Jews* ; so that he calls them their gods, in the page after ; to which that answers, that he said, that God was never truly worshipped under the law, but angels shadowing of Christ, were adored. That *Abraham* likewise believed in him who shadowed Christ.’

‘ 33. Although he professes that Christ or the word had not his real hypostasis from the beginning, yet he asserts that angels and the elect were really in God from the beginning.’

‘ 34. That substantial Deity is in all his creatures.’

‘ 35. After he had patched together several frantic notions, and those perverse, and pernicious too, of the substance of souls, from p. 220 to p. 225, of his first Dialogue, he at length concludes, that the soul was from God, and of his substance. That a created inspiration was likewise sown in it, together with the Deity ; and again by a new inspiration, it is substantially united into one light with God, by the holy spirit.’

‘ 36. Although the soul is not God, yet it was made God by the spirit, who is indeed God himself : so that it is wicked to doubt, that our soul, and the holy spirit itself of Christ, have the elementary substance of the same essentially



joined to them ; and created beings, and increased beings, unite in one substance of soul and spirit ;

‘ 37. That he has written and published horrid blasphemies against infant baptism, as it abundantly appears from all his four books of regeneration, especially at the conclusion.—Likewise that a mortal sin cannot be committed before the age of twenty.

‘ 38. That the soul is become mortal by sin, as the flesh is mortal, not that the soul is annihilated, as neither is the flesh, but the soul may be said to die, when it is deprived of all vital actions, through excessive grief, and is detained in hell, as if it was to live no more. Then he concludes, that the regenerate have another soul than before, because of their renewed substance, and new Deity, added to them.’

It is easy to perceive, that in drawing these articles, Calvin did not rigidly abide by his instructions, to ‘extract propositions, word for word, out of Servetus’ book ;’ he does not, generally, quote entire propositions ; he rather acts the part of a partial reporter, who is anxious to criminate, than that of a faithful copyist, who states fairly what another has written. It is easy to mangle a book which we wish to

render odious, by giving a partial statement of the writer's language and sentiments. In divers instances, instead of giving the sentences of Servetus entire, Calvin has given his own construction of his meaning, and quoted such detached phrases as suited his purpose. By taking Calvin's articles as the true sense of Servetus' book, the Syndics of Geneva judged by partial evidence, and that too given by his declared enemy. As christian magistrates, why did they not examine the book at large themselves, especially as the life of the prisoner was at stake? Why leave it to a prejudiced person to select what he thought proper, and construct it into a kind of indictment, which would endanger the life of a valuable member of society? But let us hear the Doctor's answer.

*Michael Servetus' Answer to John Calvin's Articles.*

‘ Calvin arrogates that authority to himself, that he writes articles like the masters of *Sorbon*, condemning every thing according to his own arbitrary pleasure, without producing any manner of reason from scripture. He is either plainly ignorant of my meaning, or else he

artfully gives a wrong turn to it, which obliges me to open my whole design here in a few words, and to produce my reasons for it, before I answer his several articles.'

'All my design was to show, that this name, Son, was properly given to the Son, as Man, in the holy scriptures; and that always, as the name *Jesus*, and the name *Christ*, is always properly given to the same. For proof of this, I brought all those places of scripture, in which the word Son is to be found, which is always taken for the Son, as Man, I affirm, that there cannot be any one place produced in the evangelists, in which the word Son is, which is not taken for the Son, as Man; if therefore the scripture always understands it so, it becomes us always so to understand it.'

'I said that the second person in the Deity, was formerly called a person, because it was a personal representation of the man Christ Jesus, hypostatically subsisting anciently in God, and visibly resplendent in the Deity itself. But because this account of the word person, is unknown to *Calvin*, and because the whole affair depends upon it, I will produce several places here, out of the ancient doctors of the church.'

[‘ *Here he makes sixteen quotations out of TERTULLIAN, ten out of IRENÆUS, and five out of the recognitions ascribed to St. CLEMENT; CALV. Refutatione Errorum; MIC. SERVETI. Tract. Theol. p. 841, 842, 843, to confirm his sense of the word person, to be the human person of the word. And then applies himself to answer the several articles of Calvin.*’]

‘ One cannot but wonder at the impudence of the man, upon the first sight of the title to the articles, where he proclaims himself orthodox, when he is no other than a disciple of *Simon Magus*, as I have evidently made appear in my apology. Who can call a criminal accuser, and a murderer, an orthodox minister of the church?’

‘ 1. To the first article I have more than once answered; and it is evident from the authors I have quoted, that in the divine essence and unity of God, there is not a real distinction of three invisible beings; but there is a personal distinction of the invisible Father, and the visible Son. I religiously believe a Trinity in this second way, not in the first.’

‘ 2. 3. 4. The like answer is to be given to the 2nd, 3rd, and 4th, as to what you say about

*Mahomet.* The *Turks* at this time confirm that to be true in part.'

'5. To the fifth article, I always professed the subsistence of the Son of God, both externally and internally, and you contradict yourself; for it was an ideal reason, it was then internal. You are plainly ignorant of what you say. What you add about a real difference has been already granted, and proved by me. I beseech you, read with attention the places quoted by me, and put on the heart of a christian, praying that the truth may be revealed to you.'

'6. To the sixth, I answer, that those which were not separate, could not be confounded. *Irenæus* interprets the same wisdom to be the holy spirit, in the 19th and 37th chapters of his fourth book. *Tertullian* does the same in his book of the flesh of Christ against *Hermogenes* and *Praxeas*. *Solomon* also, when he testifies the wisdom given to him, understands it of the holy spirit. *Ecclesiasticus*, *Baruch*, and the *Book of Wisdom*, show the same thing, as in my eighth epistle I have already cited to you. I say, that the whole mystery of the word, and of the spirit was to the glory of Christ, because in him is all the fulness of the word and spirit. O unhappy man! if you persist to damn those things you do not understand.'

' 7. Another God, did I say? I meant another made of Deity. Moreover I added this, That if this manner of speaking was offensive, you may call it another person of Deity. What occasion was there to turn that into calumny, which I had myself corrected in the same place? Your mind shows abundance of candor every where !'

' 8. Is not every one called the son of him who begot him? So say I, That God of his own substance from eternity, brought forth this Son; whence he is said to exist naturally of God.'

' 9. The word is now the flesh of Christ by hypostatical union: Thus I plainly see that the flesh of Christ is from heaven, according to the essence of the Deity, and his flesh is called the manna given from heaven. The rest I also grant in the sense I there explain it. Such things as these you here wretchedly take for granted, and neglect the main truth.'

' 10. That it is called essence, by which one is sustained in being. Are you not ashamed to alledge so many things here, and to produce no manner of ground for such calumnies? Do you think that the ears of the judges are to be stopped only by your barking?'

‘ 11. You pervert every thing, and quote the place falsely: I did not say what you impose upon me.’

‘ 12. The first part is most true, which I wish you did well understand. Christ is in himself one person, and in him is the holy spirit indeed, who also is a person.’

‘ 13. I say the seed, as the twelfth place of *Tertullian* shows; and *Irenæus* there cited, and *Philo* in p. 201, of his first Dialogue, by which all your calumny is openly removed. In that place which you quote, p. 23. the word is taken for the voice speaking from heaven, this is the Son of God. That place you have neither read, nor did you understand it, therefore that citation cometh to nothing. That the Deity of the word is something in reality besides the Son of man, who does not perceive? The rest you add I grant to be true.’

‘ 14. I grant the whole, because the Deity supplied the place of the semen, as I have explained it in the first Dialogue.’

‘ 15. I grant the same, if you understand the last to concern the paternal elements, so called from the ideal reason of them in God.’

‘ 16. I corrupt nothing, but receive both interpretations; and you there cite and teach every thing falsely.’

‘17. Your mind is so confused,’ that you cannot understand the truth; I speak metaphorically.’

‘18. I have already quoted what the authors. I have, say of person; not playing fast and loose with them, but using their own phrases, which you perfidiously abuse.’

‘19. The body of Christ is like ours, sin excepted, and also that his is partaker of the Deity.’

‘20. Transformation there, is glorification, and illustration.’

‘21. He that adheres to God, is one spirit with him: Is that confusion when two are united into one? Are mind and flesh confounded when they make one man? You are miserably ignorant of the very principles of things.’

‘22. And what then?’

‘23. It is true.’

‘24. In some sort, almost, there is some similitude, as I show in that place.’

‘25. You confound yourself not knowing what you say, as if that which subsists hypostatically in God, is not real substance.’

‘26. Person in the word is called a visible hypostasis, in the spirit a perceptible hypostasis.’



‘ 27. All the notions there are right, if you had not a perverse temper of mind.’

‘ 28. All there is true, if you would candidly understand it.’

‘ 29. All is here true likewise, except that the spirit of God is not said to be extinguished in itself, because when we are dead he departs.’

‘ 30. This is very true; and you, miserably deluded by *Simon Magus*, know nothing of the matter; making the judgment a slave, you turn us into stocks and stones. See the last quotation out of *Clement* and *Peter*.’

‘ 31. As for the most part, it is so commonly understood.’

‘ 32. So almost all things appeared to them in figure.’

‘ 33. What you put together here is false; there never was any creature, but from the instant of its creation.’

‘ 34. God is in all things by his essence, presence and power, and sustains all things in being.’

‘ 35. Take away the word out of his substance, and you will find the rest to be true, and that you yourself dote with *Simon Magus*.’

‘ 36. ’Tis true. Thus many things unite to make one, as bones, flesh, nerves, mind, form, spirit, unite to make the one substance of man.’

' 37. I wrote so, I confess ; when you shall convince me of the contrary, I will not only receive it, but I will even kiss the ground you go on.'

' 38. That place which you quote against me, shows that you deal very deceitfully with me : for there I say that the soul does as it were die, and is detained languishing in hell ; therefore if it languishes, it yet lives. See what I wrote of the existence of the soul after death. The souls of the regenerate are said to be different from the souls of others, as any thing is said to be new, from the accession of new accidents.'

The reader may observe that Servetus' answer is very concise. Calvin made a reply to it consisting of above sixty pages in *folio* ; which he, nevertheless, entitled, *A short confutation of the Errors and Impieties of MICHAEL SERVETUS, as it was offered by the ministers of Geneva to the magnificent Senate in obedience to their command.*

The reply was written with a great deal of art and shows the great accomplishments of Calvin, among which, however, candor and moderation must not be reckoned. He concluded it with these words ' Whoever thinks

justly, will acknowledge, that the main end of Michael Servetus, was to undermine all religion, by extinguishing the light of sound doctrine.' As if the whole of religion depended on the dogmas of reputed orthodoxy ! and as if every one who thinks justly must think as Calvin did ! what presumption ! The charge which he attempts to fix on Servetus, of seeking to undermine the whole of religion is absolutely false ; for whoever seeks to overthrow all religion, can himself have no religion at all ; but Servetus' works, and his whole conduct, are sufficient to convince any one that he was fully persuaded of the truth of divine revelation, and that, whatever were his mistakes, he had the cause of religion at heart. How could Calvin make so awful a conclusion, with such positivity, when he knew, if the magistrates of Geneva believed it, the massacre of Servetus would be the inevitable consequence ?

Servetus made no answer to Calvin's reply. Probably he was convinced that it was useless for him to attempt any further explanation of his sentiments, or defence of what his adversary pronounced heretical. Of what use could it be to argue with a man, whose influence was all powerful at Geneva, and who had most peremptorily affirmed that the person he accused

aimed at the overthrow of the whole of religion? He contented himself with writing some notes in the margin, and inserting some offensive words between the lines.

In his marginal notes, Servetus accuses Calvin of misrepresenting his sense, and imposing such a meaning on his words as he never intended. In one of his notes, he says 'Who denies that the Son is really distinct from God the Father? I plainly taught that the persons were distinguished by a propriety of action,' In another of his notes, he says 'In a cause so just I am resolved to persevere; nor am I at all afraid of death.'

Calvin's reply was signed by himself and fourteen other divines. Calvin subscribed first, and Nicolaus Colladonius last. Servetus wrote the following words next to their subscriptions.

'Thus far we have had noise enough indeed, and a crowd of subscribers to Calvin's dictates; but what places of scripture have they produced to prove what they assert concerning the Son, that he is an invisible and really distinct being. They do not show any, nor can they ever do it. This they should have done, had they acted up to the character of ministers of the gospel, especially since they pretend to value themselves to all the world, upon nothing

so much as this ; That, it has always been their resolution to teach nothing but what is demonstrated from plain and solid quotations of scripture: but no such quotations can be found therein. My doctrine therefore is condemned by mere clamor and noise, without producing any reason or authority whatsoever. Subscribed by *Michael Servetus*, who here is alone, but who has Christ for his undoubted protector.'

At the same time Servetus sent a latin letter to Calvin, wherein he accuses him of being ignorant of the principles of things, and that he knew nothing of this great principle, *all action is done by contact*. Lastly, he says that Calvin maintains, without any reason, that the law of the Decalogue is still in force.

On the whole it is evident the object of Calvin and his associates was not to convince the prisoner of his mistakes, but to persuade the judges that he ought to be condemned for heresy. They used every means to entangle, irritate and ruin him. They collected together the worst things they could find in his writings, gave them the most unfavorable construction possible, and prejudiced his cause, by declaring them to be 'full of impious blasphemies against God, and of other mad and profane errors,

altogether repugnant to the word of God, and the orthodox agreement of the church ;' though they knew the life of the prisoner was at stake. We find nothing like sober reasoning, and calm and earnest expostulation with him, respecting his supposed errors ; no attempts to show him from the scriptures, with meekness and gentleness, wherein he was wrong ; nothing but bitter invectives, cruel reproaches, and reiterated censures. Had these men never read the words of the apostle, ' In meekness instructing them that oppose themselves ' ? nor those others, ' Be gentle towards all men ' ? Alas ! had the faith of Geneva totally supplanted christian charity, and dried up the milk of human kindness in the breasts of its ministers ? My soul come not thou into their secret, mine honor be not united unto them ; for they devised bloody devices, and spread a net for the life of their brother.

### SECTION V.

*The petitions of Servetus to his Judges, respecting the cruel treatment he received.*

On the 15th of September the Doctor presented the following petition to his Judges.

*'Most Honored Lords,*

I humbly beseech you, that you would be pleased to put a stop to those great delays, or leave off prosecuting me as a criminal. You see that Calvin is put to his last shift, and knows not what to say, and is resolved that I should rot in a prison to please himself. I am eaten up with lice: my breeches are torn in pieces, and I have none to shift, nor another doublet; no shirt, but a very sorry one. I presented you with another petition, which was according to God: and to prevent the good effect of it, Calvin has quoted Justinian against me. Certainly he is a very unhappy man, to alledge against me what himself does not believe. He himself does not believe what Justinian says of the sanctity of churches, and of bishops and clerks, and other things relating to religion: he knows very well, that the church was then corrupted. 'Tis a great shame for him to do so; but 'tis a greater shame still, that he should have kept me a close prisoner these five weeks, without alledging any one passage against me.' [*Servetus must mean any one passage that is to the purpose.*]

'My Lords, I also desired you to allow me an attorney, or an advocate, as you have allowed

one to my adversary, who did not want it so much as I do, who am a foreigner, unacquainted with the customs of this country; and yet you have granted his requests and denied mine, and set him at liberty before you took cognizance of my cause. I desire that my cause may be removed to the council of two hundred, with my petitions; and if I can appeal to them I actually do it, protesting against all charges and expenses, and insisting upon *pœna talionis*, not only against the first accuser, but also against Calvin, who has taken the cause upon himself. From your prison at Geneva, September 15, 1553.

MICHAEL SERVETUS *pleading his own cause.*

On the 22nd of September Servetus presented another petition as follows.

*Most Honored Lords,*

I am confined like a criminal, and prosecuted by John Calvin, who has falsely accused me, pretending that I have published.

1. That human souls are mortal; and also,

2. That Jesus Christ took only the fourth part of his body from the virgin Mary.

These are horrid and execrable things.—  
There is no heresy nor crime so great, as that of



asserting, that the soul is mortal; for there is hope of salvation in all other crimes and heresies, but not in this. Whoever maintains such a thing, does not believe the being of a God, nor a divine justice, nor the resurrection, nor Jesus Christ, nor the holy scriptures; in a word, he believes nothing at all. Had I said and published such a thing, to infect the world, I should condemn myself to death.'

'Wherefore, my Lords, I desire that my false accuser should be punished *pœna talionis*, and confined to a prison, as I am, till he or I be condemned to death, or to some other punishment. I am willing to die, if he is not convicted both of this and other things, which I shall lay to his charge. I beg of you, my Lords, to do me justice; justice, my Lords, justice. From my prison at Geneva, September 22, 1553.

MICHAEL SERVETUS *pleading his own cause.*'

This petition was attended with the following articles.

'Some articles, about which Michael Servetus requires John Calvin should be interrogated.'

'1. Whether in March last he got William Trie to write to Lyons, and said a great many things against Michael Villanovanus, alias

Servetus, what were the contents of that letter, and for what end it was written.'

'2. Whether he sent, with the said letter, one half of the first quire of the said Servetus' book, containing the title, the index, and the beginning of the said book, entitled, *Christianismi Restitutio*.'

'3. Whether it be not true, that the whole was sent to show the officials at Lyons, that the said Servetus might be prosecuted as it appeared by the event.'

'4. Whether about a fortnight after, he sent, by the same Trie, about twenty latin letters (which the said Servetus had written to him) according to the desire of his enemies at Lyons, that the said Servetus might be more easily prosecuted, and convicted, as it appeared by the event.'

'5. Whether he was not informed since, that by virtue of the said accusation, the said Servetus was burnt in effigy, and his estate confiscated; and that he would actually have been burnt, had he not made his escape.'

'6. Whether he knows not, that it does not become a minister of the gospel to prosecute a man to death.'

‘My Lords, there are four weighty and undeniable reasons, for which Calvin ought to be condemned.’

‘*First*, Because no man ought to be prosecuted like a criminal for any doctrinal point, as I have showed in my petitions, and shall make it appear more at large by the ancient doctors of the church; and therefore he has made a very ill use of a criminal prosecution, and acted against the character of a minister of the gospel.’

‘*Secondly*, Because he is a false accuser, as you may see by these papers, and as it will plainly appear, by the reading of my book.’

‘*Thirdly*, Because he designs to stifle the doctrine of Christ by frivolous and calumnious arguments, as you plainly see by my papers; for he has inserted in them great lies and wicked things.’

‘*Fourthly*, Because he follows, in a great measure, the doctrine of Simon Magus, contrary to all the doctors that ever lived in the church: and therefore being a magician, he ought not only to be condemned, but also expelled from your city: and his estate ought to be adjudged to me as an equivalent for the loss of mine which he has occasioned. This is, my

Lords, what I desire of you, written the above-said day, &c.

MICHAEL SERVETUS *pleading his own cause.*

The following is the last Petition of Servetus.

*Magnificent Lords,*

' 'Tis now three weeks since I desired to have a hearing, but could not obtain it. I beseech you, for Jesus Christ's sake, not to deny me what you would not deny a *Turk*, when I desire you to do me justice. I have several things to tell you, that are very important and necessary.'

' As for the orders you gave, that something should be done to keep me clean, they have not been performed; and I am more miserable than ever. Besides, I am very much troubled with cold, by reason of my cholic and rupture, which occasions some other miseries that I am ashamed to write. 'Tis a great piece of cruelty, that I should not be allowed to speak, in order to supply my wants. For God's sake my Lords, give some orders about it, either out of compassion or out of duty. October 10, 1553.

MICHAEL SERVETUS.'

Thus did the poor sufferer petition, but his petitions were as fruitless as if howled out to the winds: his cruel persecutors were not to be moved by his distresses, nor by any considerations of either justice or compassion; bigotry had steeled their hearts. Robbed of his property, consigned to a noisome dungeon, they resolved he should languish there, till they committed him to the flames.

### SECTION VI.

*The correspondence between Calvin, the magistrates of Geneva, and the reformed ministers, and magistrates, on the case of Servetus.*

Sensible that the trial of Servetus was an affair of great consequence, and that it would be exposing themselves to censure if they put him to death without the countenance of other protestant churches, the magistrates of Geneva resolved to consult the magistrates of the protestant cantons of Switzerland, before they gave sentence against him. By obtaining their countenance they might think they should save themselves from the opprobrium of so highly popish a measure as that of burning a man for his opinions: but partnership in guilt lessens

not personal infamy. They sent to them the Doctor's book printed at Vienne, and also the writings of Calvin, and the prisoner's answers ; and at the same time desired to have the opinion of their divines on the affair. This produced a correspondence, which is of the more importance, because it casts light on the principles and general temper of the reformers.

'The magistrates of Zurich answered, that they had consulted their ministers, and intreated the council of Geneva to oppose strenuously Servetus' heresy. Being fully persuaded (say they) that you will not suffer the wicked intention of your prisoner to have its effect, since it is altogether contrary to the christian religion, and occasions a great scandal.' Their letter is dated October 2.

The Zurich divines expressed themselves more fully. Calvin thought fit to transmit their letter entire to posterity, with an introduction, excusing himself for omitting the letters from the other churches. *Calo. Theo. Tract.* 860, 861. Gen. Edit. 1576.

*Calvin's introduction to the letter from the divines  
at Zurich.*

‘When Servetus had satiated himself, in venting his spleen in the most opprobrious terms, our most excellent senate, in order to form the more certain judgment how to proceed against him, in a way as little obnoxious to reflection as possible, sent to have the advice of four of the Helvetic churches, that of Zurich, of Berne, of Basil, and of Schaffhausen, and consulted their pastors concerning the whole case. That Servetus might not have the least shadow of pretence to complain, that he was undone by the multitude of articles concerted against him; we chose to drop his last reproaches, rather than take that to ourselves, which we might lawfully have done. Besides, our readers will readily acknowledge that we have so far studied brevity, as not only to keep ourselves free from false glosses, but that we have handled matters more sparingly than what the nature of them would in reality bear us out in; and that we contained ourselves within the limits of a just exposition. For that the truth might come before the judges with the utmost simplicity and clearness; we only briefly touch

upon the main heads, that it might evidently appear that we proceeded no further than the necessity of our office constrained us to. When therefore our reverend brethren had, according to their own singular piety, and their distinguished affection for the church of Christ, diligently perused and considered the whole affair of Servetus, they wisely returned this for an answer; that the whole book was a detestable monster, made up of innumerable errors. In short, they all with one heart and one voice gave it as their opinion, that the errors, for the sake of which Servetus made such loud complaints of the cruel injustice done him, were censured by us with no less faithfulness than justice. Thinking therefore it would be superfluous to insert the answers of each church singly; I content myself, lest I should be thought to affect prolixity, only to give to the public, the epistle from the church at Zurich, which may serve as a specimen of the others, from which it contains nothing different; and in it you may see the faith of all the rest: nor am I at all afraid that the other churches will take it amiss that their epistles are suppressed, as if they had not equal honor done to them; for the vain-glorious applause of the world



they had not the least in view; and I am well assured that this testimony of their holy agreement will be of much more account with them, than if each of them had had their sentiments made public by themselves. I should rather ask pardon of my Zurichian brethren, for publishing that to the world which they wrote to a few. But because the common good of the church, which with them is of the greatest weight, doth require it, they will, I hope, easily excuse my presumption.'

LETTER FROM THE ZURICH DIVINES.

*'To our most honored Lords the Syndics; and to the most august senate of the republic of GENEVA, health and happiness.'*

'We have by this express, received your excellencies letters; together with Servetus' book, and the articles taken out of it, signed mutually by your preachers, our venerable, and dear brethren: and by Michael Servetus. And because your piety demanded from us, that we should carefully examine, diligently consider, all those things, and give our judgment upon them; we with all due deference to your lordships, will lay before your excellencies (with the assistance of God) our sentiments

concerning this whole affair, of the unity and trinity of God, of the mystery of the Son of God, and what we judge concerning the controversy, and writings of the ministers of your church, and of Servetus, with all the brevity and perspicuity possible. We make no manner of scruple to acknowledge the adorable mystery of the unity and trinity of God blessed for ever, to have existed from the beginning of the world: that this was firmly believed by all the saints, and faithfully handed down to be believed by posterity, and openly declared in the scriptures by prophets truly inspired by the holy Ghost. This main principle of true theology has been so sufficiently confirmed by the oracles of God, established by such evident signs, and so unanimously received by the catholic and orthodox church, as well of the old as of the new testament, that it has been always looked on as a great piece of wickedness so much as to call it in question. We therefore acknowledge with the holy and universal church of God, that the essence of God is one, that there are three persons distinct, not confused; for the Father testified from heaven of his own Son, This is my beloved Son (says he) in whom I am well pleased. He is the Son to whom the Father bore that testimony, and the

holy Ghost appeared in the form of a dove, three distinct divine persons indeed in one essence. There arose, it is true, before the council of Nice, Praxeas, Noetus, and Sabellius, who were called by the ancients Patripassians, who to preserve the unity of God confounded the distinction of persons. But they were learnedly and irrefragably confuted by the watchful guides of the church, and the adorable mystery of the trine unity of God was defended by the scriptures, and preserved in the church. From whence it is certain, that the guides of the church, in the Nicene council, delivered no other creed to us than that which the catholic and orthodox church retained from the times of the apostles, yea even of the prophets. Since therefore that Spaniard Servetus, often calls the co-eternal trinity of God a three headed monster, and a certain tripartite Cerberus, since he calls the trinity imaginary gods, illusions, and three spirits of Demons, he does most wickedly and horribly blaspheme the eternal majesty of God. And in that he calls Athanasius, Augustin, and other excellent servants of God, and illustrious lights of the church, trinitarians, and so of course atheists, (for so he styles all who acknowledge a trinity) he doth not only most unworthily revile these, but the whole body of

the saints, and consequently the whole church of Christ, with the most wicked and intolerant reproaches. What likewise appears most abominable in the unhappy man, is, that he should excuse the blasphemies of the Jews uttered against the christian religion, and that he should not only approve but applaud those vile words of Mahomet, that the three persons in the trinity, or as he himself says, the three gods who were unknown to the fathers of the Jews, were the sons of Beelzebub. What more impious against God, and what more unworthy of our pure christian faith, could possibly come from this wretch? What christian ears, we beseech you, can hear these things with patience? The church of God has unanimously believed and taught the doctrine concerning the Son of God, that he subsisted from the beginning, from eternity, in his proper hypostasis. For this was taught out of the word of God, the Lord himself openly declaring in the gospel, before Abraham was I am, by the substance not of flesh indeed, but by the substance of divinity. According to which the apostle calls him the express image of his Father's substance, where he likewise quotes that testimony out of the old scriptures, *Thou art my Son this day have I begotten thee.* This Son, who is the Son of God

from eternity, true God, in time became the Son of man, true man: born not of the substance of God the father, but of the substance of the virgin Mary, his mother, whom God by his spirit made pregnant, from whence he, the Son, is called the blessed seed of the woman, and the offspring of David, and the son of man, although the person remains in one undivided, yet retaining two natures unmixed, or not confused, divine and human. This is a truth proved long ago by such perspicuous and plain testimonies of scripture, and appears now so manifest, that he that doubts of it is mad with his wits about him. We therefore, with simplicity and unanimity, firmly believe, as we have already explained ourselves; and we preach the same common faith in the church. Servetus therefore is again convicted of being a blasphemer against the Son of God: who is not afraid of vilifying the hypostasis of the Son which was existing, and co-essential and co-equal to the Father, as if it was no more than a diabolical idea, and a certain fabulous chimera. Besides, he is so impudent as to assert, that the Father of the corporeal Son, was no other than God the Father himself, of whose substance the flesh of the Son was born. Paul, the teacher of the Gentiles, taught far otherwise, who said that

the Son of God was begotten of the seed of David according to the flesh, and declared the Son of God, with the power, and spirit of sanctification. But why should we go on to recollect the particular blasphemies of that man? The pastors and doctors of your church have, with great diligence and faithfulness, collected his several enormous errors, and flagrant heresies; in that writing, which bears this title, 'Sentences or propositions extracted from Michael Servetus' books.' We find that they were not extracted, or signed through malice, and we are so far from receiving or approving of them, that we rather abhor and execrate them; for Servetus, by his answers immediately subjoined to them, has not explained, but intricated the matter, by putting a wrong sense upon many passages of the ancients, about the unity and trinity of God, and the mystery of the Son of God, as the ministers of your church have by their answer abundantly evinced. The replies and glosses of Servetus have nothing in them but extreme impudence and cursed reproaches. He so often throws his favorite (*Mentiris*) thou liest, at Calvin. He so often reviles him with being a magician, Simon Magus, that we grieve and blush to repeat it; especially since the thing itself, and the writings

of Servetus thoroughly examined, sufficiently testify that Calvin forged nothing false against him; whereas Servetus rather denied the things he had asserted, and gave a false coloring to them. Nor do we at all doubt but that the singular faith and care of your pastor and our brother Calvin, together with his egregious merit towards exiles, and other pious people, will appear too bright in the eyes of your eminences, and other good men, to be obscured by the criminations of such a fellow as Servetus. And this appears sufficiently by your excellencies' letter, in which to our great satisfaction, you say that you don't desire our opinion out of any diffidence of the ministers of your church, but rather that our judgment in these affairs might not be altogether unknown. Now in what manner you may use a coercive power upon this man, who revives those heresies that were formerly exploded and condemned by the church according to the scriptures, and opposes the main established principles of our faith, by which opposition he reproaches God and his saints, we leave to your judgment to determine. If we are not mistaken in the name, this Servetus begun this mischief above twenty years ago, when Johannes Oecolampadius, of blessed memory, endeavored to reclaim the man. And then likewise the

doctrine of Servetus was condemned by those who first preached the gospel of Christ in those parts. But he, tenacious of his sentiments, did nevertheless take care to publish in Germany, in the year 1531, seven books concerning errors about the trinity, and some dialogues, by which no doubt, a great many not well versed in the scriptures, and weak in the faith, were precipitated into great danger both as to body and soul: and yet, as if he was not content with this, he goes on to outdo himself in impiety and blasphemy, by reprinting the most pestilent errors, and unsufferable blasphemies, obtruding on the church the most corrupt doctrine, under the specious title of the restitution of christianity. We are therefore of opinion that we ought to use all our faith and diligence in opposition to this man; especially since our churches are evil spoken of abroad, as if they were heretical, and favored heretics. The holy providence of God therefore has put an opportunity into your hands of purging yourselves, together with us, from the vile suspicion of so great an evil, viz, if ye shall take effectual care to put a stop to the growing contagion of this person, which we doubt not but you will do to all intents and purposes.'



‘ May the Lord Jesus Christ add wisdom and courage to your piety, and show you the reasonable and just way of doing his will to the glory of his name, and the preservation of the true faith and his church. We present and recommend ourselves and services to your excellencies. We were obliged to detain the express three whole days, because we could not explain ourselves sooner.

Your Lordships

Devoted Servants,

The Pastors and Readers,

Ministers of the Church

at ZURICH.

ZURICH, 21 Oct. 1553.

The council of Schaffhausen answered, the 6th of October, That they had referred the examination of that affair to their ministers, whose opinion they might know by their letter.— Those divines, having expressed their abhorrence of Servetus’ errors, conclude with these words, ‘ Nor do we doubt, but that through your great prudence you will oppose his design, and hinder his blasphemies from preying, like a cancer, any longer upon the members of Christ. For to pretend to answer his extravagances by long arguments, would be acting madly with

a madman. 'They add that they subscribe to the judgment of the Zurich divines.

The magistrates of Basil answered in a few words, that they had left that affair to the consideration of their divines. Their answer is dated October 12. The ministers of Basil, in a letter bearing the same date, testify their obhorrence of Servetus' heresy, and then add 'Lastly, we exhort you to use your utmost endeavor to reclaim him, provided the scandal he has occasioned may be removed. But if he continues to be incurable, let him be so restrained (as it is your duty, and according to the power you have received from the Lord) that for the time to come he may do no harm to the church of Christ, lest the end should prove worse than the beginning. To that end the Lord himself will give you his spirit, and strength, and wisdom, &c.

The magistrates of Berne answered, that they had consulted their divines, and desired the magistrates of Geneva to prevent the progress of errors. 'We desire you (say they) not doubting that you are inclined to it, to take care that such errors, or the like, be not sowed in the church of Jesus Christ our only Saviour, by

which means you will preserve her from trouble and adversity, and promote the glory of God.'

The ministers of Berne expressed themselves in these words: 'We pray God that he would be pleased to give you the spirit of prudence, wisdom, and courage, that you may remove this plague, not only from your own church, but also from all others, and at the same time not to do any thing that is unworthy of christian magistrates.' Their letter is dated in the year 1553.

Calvin wrote a letter to his friend Farel, minister of the church of Neufchatel, dated the 20th. of August, in which he informed him of Servetus' imprisonment. 'We are now (says he) engaged with Servetus. Perhaps he only designed to go through the city; for we don't know yet what reason moved him to come hither. He has been discovered, and I have been of opinion that he should be arrested. He is prosecuted by Nicholas (*de la Fontaine*) who brought the next day forty heads of accusation against him, offering himself to be tried by the *lex talionis*. At first he varied in his answers; and therefore I was sent for. He abused me, as if he had had great injustice done him. I have treated him as he deserves. At last the

magistrates have declared that all the articles have been proved against him. Nicolas was set at liberty three days after; and on the fourth he was acquitted, my brother being security for him. I hope Servetus will be condemned to death; but I wish the severity of his punishment may be softened.'

Farel answered Calvin in a letter dated October 8, 'Tis a wonderful providence (says he) that Servetus should come to Geneva. I wish he may repent though never so late. It will be a mighty thing if he dies a true penitent, undergoing but one death, though he deserves to die a thousand times; and if he endeavors to edify the spectators, having made it his business to pervert many people that are dead, and others that are still living, and even those that shall be born hereafter. The judges must be very cruel, and perfect enemies of Christ and his church, if they are not affected with the horrid blasphemies with which that pernicious heretic attacks the divine majesty, and endeavors to overthrow the gospel, and to corrupt all the churches. But I hope that those, who are commended for inflicting a just punishment upon thieves and sacrilegious persons, will do their duty in this case, by taking off a man who has

so long and so obstinately persisted in his heresy, and undone so many people. In desiring that the severity of the punishment should be moderated ; you act the part of a friend towards a man who is your great enemy. But I beseech you to behave yourself in such a manner, that no one may be so bold for the time to come as to publish new doctrines, and occasion so much disturbance as this man has done.'

On the 9th of September Calvin wrote a letter to Sulcerus, a divine of Switzerland. Calvin tells him that he has, doubtless, heard of Servetus ; that he is the same person of whom Bucer (though otherwise a moderate man) said in the pulpit, that he deserved to have his entrails plucked out, and to be torn in pieces. Calvin adds: 'Nor do I at all pretend, but that I really thought it my duty to do all that lay in my power to crush such an obstinate, and irreclaimable fellow, that the contagion might spread no further.' The design of this letter plainly appears from the following expressions : ' But because I hope you will take care to represent the impiety of the man as it deserves, I will add no more, only I give you notice of this one thing, that the *Quæstor* of the city, who brings these letters to you, is well affected to the cause,

that at least it may not miss the end we wish for. I wish all your old disciples were animated in the same manner. (Calvin, Ep. p. 114, Gen. 1575.

The 23rd of August, Calvin wrote a letter to the ministers of the church of Frankfort; whereby he informed them, that Servetus had printed at Vienne a book full of errors and blasphemies; that many copies had been sent to Frankfort the last Easter fair; that the printer's factor being a pious man, had not been willing to expose them to sale, and that the bearer of that letter would tell them in what warehouse they were to be found. *Lastly*, he desires those divines to burn all those books. He acquaints them that, 'The author himself is shut up in prison by our magistrates, and doubt not but he will shortly be brought to condign punishment.'

Bullinger, another famous divine of Switzerland, wrote a letter to Calvin, dated September 14, which contains the following passage.— 'The Lord (says he) has given the magistrates of Geneva a fair opportunity of clearing themselves and the church from heresy, by delivering

Servetus into their hands. Therefore, if they treat that rascal as he deserves; all the world will see that the Genevese hate blasphemers; that they prosecute with the sword of justice those heretics who are truly obstinate; and that they maintain and vindicate the glory of God.'

In a letter written by Calvin to Bullinger, dated October 25, are these words, 'Tis not known yet what will be the fate of that man. However, as far as I can guess, the judges will condemn him to-morrow, and he will be executed the next day.'

It seems the judges had resolved on the 23rd of October to condemn Servetus to be burnt alive. This may be inferred from the following passage relating to that day. 'After having heard the answers before mentioned, and the decree of the ministers of churches; the said attainted Michael Servetus is referred to hear the goodwill of *Messieurs*, to administer justice day by day.'

I leave the reader to make his own remarks on this curious Correspondence, after asking this one question. If the spirit it discovers be

the spirit of reformation, what is the spirit of popery?

### SECTION VII.

#### *Servetus condemned to die.*

On the 26th of October Servetus was actually condemned to die. On the same day Calvin informed Farel by letter how the case stood. 'The messenger (says he) that was sent to the *Swiss*, is come back. They all unanimously declare, that Servetus has revived the impious errors, with which Satan did formerly disturb the church; and that he is an intolerable monster. Those of *Basil* are right. Those of *Zurich* are the most vehement; for they express the heinousness of his impiety in very emphatical words, and exhort our magistrates to use him very severely. Those of *Schaffhausen* subscribe to their judgment. The letter of the divines at *Berne*, which is also to the purpose, is attended with that of their senate, whereby our magistrates have been very much animated. Cæsar, a comical man, who pretended to be sick for three days, came to court at last to acquit that profligate fellow; for he was not ashamed to



propose, that the cause should be removed to the council of two hundred. Nevertheless he has been condemned without any dispute. He will be executed to-morrow. We have endeavored to commute that sort of death; but it was in vain. I will tell you when I see you, why the judges have not granted our request.'

'Tis observable, that this letter was written to Farel, at Neufchatel, the 26th of October, and that he arrived at Geneva the next day, and consequently before he could receive it. It seems he went to Geneva of his own motion, to be present at the execution of Servetus.

The following is the process drawn up before the Syndics of Geneva, against Servetus, and the sentence pronounced on him, by those cruel magistrates.

*' Process drawn up before our most dreaded Lords the Syndics, judges of criminal causes in this City, at the pursuit and instance of the Lord Lieutenant of the said City, against Michael Servetus, of Villanueva in the Kingdom of Arragon in Spain.*

' Who in the first place has been convicted of having, about twenty-three or twenty-four years ago, caused a book to be printed at Agnon (it should be Haguenau) in Germany,

against the holy and undivided Trinity, containing many great blasphemies against it, which have occasioned a great scandal in the churches of the said *Germany*; which book he has freely confessed to have printed, notwithstanding the remonstrances made to him about his false opinions, by the learned evangelical doctors of the said *Germany*.'

'*Item*, The said book was condemned by the doctors of the churches of the said *Germany*, as being full of heresies; and the said Servetus ran away from the said *Germany*, on account of the said book.'

'*Item*, Notwithstanding this, the said Servetus has persisted in his errors, infecting many people with them.'

'*Item*, Not contented with this, the better to spread his venom and heresy, he has not long since caused another book to be printed privately at *Vienne* in *Dauphine*, full of the said heresies, and horrid and execrable blasphemies, against the holy Trinity, against the Son of God, and infant baptism, and against many other articles and fundamental points of the christian religion.'

'*Item*, He has freely confessed, that in the said book he calls those who believe the Trinity, Trinitarians and Atheists.'

‘*Item*, He calls the Trinity a D——, and a M——ter with th—ee H——ds.’

‘*Item*, Contrary to the true foundation of the christian religion, and blaspheming horribly against the Son of God, he says that Christ is not the Son of God from all eternity, but only from the time of his incarnation.’

‘*Item*. Whereas the scripture says, that Jesus Christ is the Son of *David*, according to the flesh, he wretchedly denies it, and says he was formed of the substance of God the Father, having received three elements from him, and one only from the virgin, whereby he wickedly pretends to destroy the true humanity of our Lord Jesus Christ, the sovereign comfort of poor mankind.’

‘*Item*, That infant baptism is a diabolical invention, and a mere conjuration.’

‘*Item*, Many other things, and execrable blasphemies, with which the said book is all over stuffed, very scandalous, and against the honor and majesty of God, the Son of God, and the holy Spirit; which is a cruel and horrid murdering perdition, and destruction of many poor souls, that are spoiled by the said false and execrable doctrine; a dreadful thing to be mentioned.’

‘*Item*. The said Servetus being full of malice, has intituled the said book, written against God and his evangelical doctrine, *Christianismi Restitutio*; that is, *Christianity Restored*; the better to seduce and deceive ignorant people, and that he might the more easily infect the readers of the said book, with his wretched and pernicious venom, under pretence of teaching a good doctrine.’

‘*Item*, Besides the said book attacking our faith even with letters, and endeavoring to infect it with his poison, he has freely confessed and acknowledged to have written a letter to one of the ministers of this city, in which, among many horrid and enormous blasphemies against our holy and evangelical religion, he says our gospel is without faith, and without a God; and that instead of a God, we have a th—e h—d C—us.’

‘*Item*, He has moreover confessed, that he was committed to prison in the above-said city of *Vienne*, which he perfidiously broke, and made his escape.’

‘*Item*, The said Servetus did not only rise up against the true christian religion, but like an arrogant broacher of heresies, against the papists and others; insomuch that he was

burnt in effigy at *Vienne*, with five bales of his books.

‘*Item*, Notwithstanding all this, being committed to the prison of this city, he has maliciously persisted in his pernicious and detestable errors, endeavoring to maintain them with injurious words and calumnies against all true christians, and faithful professors of the pure and unspotted christian religion, calling them Trinitarians, Atheists, and Conjurors, notwithstanding the remonstrances made to him long ago in *Germany*, as has been said, and though he has been reproved, and imprisoned here, and elsewhere; as may be seen more at large in his trial.’

Such was the process drawn up against Servetus: which will bear the following short commentary. The notions of John Calvin, and his adherents, were identified with the scriptures, and supposed to constitute, beyond all controversy, the true christian religion. Whatever was spoken and written against his notions, was taken for granted to be spoken and written against God and his Son, to be subversive of christianity, and horribly blasphemous and heretical. To oppose Calvin’s dogmas was called rising up against christianity. What was spo-

ken against that great man was considered as spoken against all true christians. And, as if the end sanctified the means, the confidence of a private correspondence was violated, and the writing letters to the orthodox divines of Geneva turned into an act of criminality, because the writer opposed some of their opinions; to escape from a popish prison, in which he had been unjustly confined, was made in Servetus' case, an act of perfidy, and *his* opposing the papists and others was construed into a proof of his being an arrogant broacher of heresies, and that too by men who had professedly renounced popery. His persisting in opinions which he believed to be true, and thought perfectly consistent with the scriptures, was denominated maliciously persisting in pernicious and detestable errors. It was concluded that he could not assert his own opinions, and oppose those of the leading reformers, from any principle but malice. For these things he was thought worthy of death. The plain fact is this: Servetus did not believe Calvin's notions respecting some of the doctrines of christianity, he thought them subversive of the scriptures, and to have a pernicious tendency; therefore, as an honest man, he opposed them by reason and argument: he did firmly believe the scrip-

Lieutenant, to cause our present sentence to be put in execution.'

This process and sentence authorize the conclusion that the reformation at Geneva had left the ancient penal laws against heretics in full force: only the reformed had assumed to themselves the right of determining who were heretics, and exposed as such to the vengeance of those barbarous laws. How could the Syndics, acting as Judges of criminal causes, have ranked errors and heresies among capital crimes had not some law existed which declared them to be such?

M. de la Chapple says of Servetus persecutors, 'They began by depriving him of every means whereby he might procure to himself the smallest comfort in prison; they laid hold of ninety-seven pieces of gold, a chain of twenty crowns, and six gold rings, which he was so effectually robbed of, that he never heard any more of them; afterwards they put him into a damp dungeon, where he was eaten up with vermin; this resembles the Spanish inquisition not a little. It is true, that the prisoner obtained confronting of parties, the use of papers in his process, ink, pen, paper, books, and the liberty of giving what explanations he thought

necessary, by word of mouth or writing; which is not allowed at the tribunals of the holy catholic office. But the orders of the Magistrates, if there were any such orders, to put him in a cleaner place, were never executed; he was not suffered to have an advocate to direct him, or to plead his cause, which perfectly well agrees with the ecclesiastical proceedings of episcopal courts in cases of heresy. On the whole we see some small alterations which the light of the reformation began to make.——

It was however at bottom, the same spirit which reigned, and the same sanguinary law which was followed; this was carried on to the end; for when the question was to fix the nature of the punishment, they determined that which ancient custom had established. In vain did some persons, more moderate, propose banishment, or, at least, a death less cruel than the flames; Calvin was amongst these last, but in vain, I say, did they make any such overtures, the majority of votes amongst the Judges, stuck to the ancient custom, and Servetus, declared to be a heretic, was to be burnt alive; that which certainly could not have been determined in this manner, but in consequence of the laws and customs of the city.' Before the



propriety of what the same writer adds, that 'It is purely, therefore, to these laws and those customs, and not to Calvin's rage, that we are to ascribe the severities Servetus underwent in prison, and the inhumanity of the punishment to which he was condemned,' be admitted, the following questions ought to be answered.— Did not Calvin know when he procured the arrest of Servetus, instituted a criminal process against him, and did all in his power to convict him, what would be the consequences if he succeeded? Did he not understand the laws of Geneva? Could not he whose influence was all-powerful in the city, whose authority was in certain instances paramount to that of the civil power, have obtained the abolition, or amendment of such cruel laws and customs, had he attempted it in good earnest? Was it in his power to effect the reformation of every thing but injustice and barbarity? was he not manifestly the prime mover of all the proceedings against Servetus; proceedings which rival those of popish persecutors?

## SECTION VIII.

*The dying speech of Servetus.*

The last words of a dying man are generally heard with attention, and are likely to leave a deep impression on the mind, especially the dying words of one distinguished by superiority of understanding and many eminent qualities; but above all the dying speech of a sufferer in the cause of truth and liberty, about to make his exit amid devouring flames, must excite a peculiar interest. In that awful moment, it is natural to expect, all reserve will be laid aside, and the purest dictates of the mind be expressed with the utmost seriousness and fidelity. The dying speech of Servetus is peculiarly important, as it contains an exposure of the leading doctrines in defence of which he became a martyr.

After having heard his sentence pronounced, he thought it meet to make the following speech, which fully refutes the base calumnies of his enemies, who would have it believed that he died a blasphemer of God and his Son.

MICHAEL SERVETUS' *Speech before he was burnt at Geneva, concerning the true knowledge of God and his Son.*

'They who assert three substantial persons or hypostases in the Godhead, do insinuate to us that there are three Gods by nature equal; for they tell us there are three substantial, distinct, and different things, and will have every one of those things or hypostases (as they call them) to be a God. Thus they do necessarily make three equal and distinct Gods; for since these persons or hypostases, differing in number and fact, are each of them predicated of God, the consequence is plain, that there are as many predicates as subjects, and that the number of Gods must be equal to the number of persons. And although in words they tell us there is only one God; yet in effect and reality they represent three to our understanding: for every man of the least skill, or ingenuity must see, that three are proposed to him as the objects of his adoration. No man yet could ever explain or inform us how he understood that these three, of which each is a God, were only one God. There remains therefore, both on the mind and understanding, this insuperable perplexity, and inexplicable confusion, that three are one, and one is three. For although the whole under-

standing intends, and is directed to one God, and proposeth to itself one God to be worshipped in spirit, and is thoroughly persuaded of the unity; yet immediately three distinct objects present themselves, and frequently appear to the mind, each of which it knows to be a God; and and thus seeing that three equal and distinct Gods are represented to its view, it faints, being confounded between one and three; this is the issue of the *Greek Trias*, or triplicity. But if on the other hand, we are willing to try the whole matter, by the word of the holy scripture, as by a touchstone, and to find out the true knowledge of God, according to the words of God himself, all confusion and perplexity will immediately vanish, and our understanding will not be obliged to admit any thing in itself contradictory.'

'We must therefore remark, first, that God is the common name of all power, dominion, and superiority, and properly belongs to him, who is over all, who is the Prince of all, the King of kings, and Lord of lords, of whom all are, and on whom they depend, who alone is the Father and Creator of all things. But if taken in a more limited sense, it may also agree with the creatures, as whosoever has a power and

superiority from God, over another, he may be stued his God. As *Moses*, *Exod.* 7, 1, is called the God of Pharoah. And *Cyrus*, *Isa.* 45, 3, the God of Israel. And if only for example sake, I may be permitted to join profane things to sacred: *Augustus Cæsar* was *Virgil's*, and *Lentulus*, *Cicero's* God, because he was the author of his restitution. After this manner the scripture calls Gods whomsoever the supreme and eternal God hath adorned and exalted above others, by any particular favor, virtue, or privilege. Hence the *Psalmist*, *Ps.* 82, 6. *I have said ye are gods, and all of you the children of the most high:* and *Exod.* 22, 28. These are not Gods by nature, but by the grace and gift of God, and therefore they are never called by the name of the Deity, which belongs to the supreme God only; for such amongst the Hebrews, are named Gods and Lords, *Elohim* and *Adonui*, by which the names of the Deity are properly distinguished; but the proper and singular name *JEHOVAH* is never attributed to them, the Lord (*here something in the manuscript, from which this account was taken, is wanting*): and therefore St. Paul begins all his epistles after this manner; *Grace and peace from God our Father, and our Lord Jesus Christ.* But to make three Gods by nature equal, is the

master-piece of blasphemy, and a cursed impiety. We must ascribe all things to one, viz. to him, who is the author of all things, and who for his own pleasure created them; for he only by nature is of himself God; all the rest are not Gods of themselves, they receive and acknowledge their measure of the Godhead, from the one God the Father. From God they are called Gods; for the supreme and sovereign God is able to sanctify the creatures, and fill them with the divinity. But we can by no means establish three Gods by nature equal, without setting up at the same time, three Creators or Almightyes, and three Fathers; for the name of God simply, belongs to the Father only, who is of himself God, and who created all things, and he alone is simply and absolutely called God. From what has been said, 'tis easy to show, how our Lord Jesus Christ, the true Son of God, is called God: for from God the Father he receiveth the proportion of his Godhead, and from the true God, he is stiled the true God, the God indeed of all creatures, but not the Father's God, to whom he hath subjected all things. Moreover the Father who only by nature is God of himself, is nevertheless the Lord and God of the Son; which the Son declareth, John 14,

28. *I go unto my Father, for my Father is greater than I.* John 20, 17. *I ascend unto my Father and your Father, and to my god and your God.* Matt. 27, 46. *My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me.* Rev. 3, 12. *I will write upon him the name of my God, and the name of the city of my God.* Neither doth their interpretation, who say that the Son spoke these things as a man, not as a God, avail any thing; to which we reply, that the manner of the Deity, which the Son possesseth, agrees with him as a man; for the Son is a man made God, or filled with the divinity, therefore the superiority of the Father is not taken away by the Son; for although the Son is constituted by the Father our Lord, God and head; yet the Father is still the Lord, and God, and head of the Son; 1 Cor. 11, 3. and the Son is subject to the Father; 1 Cor. 15, 28. and he is the manager and administrator of his Father's house; Heb. 2, 8. and therefore the Son, as our God, and our head, hath admitted the Deity and superiority of the Father over himself. Hence the prophetic eloquently explaining this twofold manner of the Godhead of the Father and Son, saith to the Son; Psal. 45, 2, 6, 7. *Thou art fairer than the children of men; Grace is poured into thy lips: therefore, thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever. The*

*sceptre of thy kingdom is a right sceptre. Thou lovest righteousness, and hatest wickedness: therefore God, thy God, hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness, above thy fellows.* See how David in spirit calls the Son God, and the Father God of the Son, for thy throne, O God; and hath anointed thee, O God, are of the vocative case, and respect the Son; but thy God, which follows, is spoken of God the Father, who did anoint and sanctify the Son. Likewise *wisdom*, which represents the Son of God, cries out after this manner, Eccles. 24, 12, *I took root in an honorable people, even in the portion of the Lord's inheritance.* Hence then it is manifest, to every one that makes the scripture his rule, that the Son is God from the Father; and that, as God of all, constituted by the Father, he acknowledgeth the divinity and superiority of the Father over himself; though this distinction of divine names is not found among the *Greeks* and *Latins*, and all are called by one common name God, yet by nature there is of himself, but one eternal, most excellent, supreme, immortal, invisible, incomprehensible God, dwelling in inaccessible light, who created and governs all things, from whom all things are, and on whom all things depend. This is the God of Gods, King of kings, and



Lord of lords, JEHOVAH, the Father, who alone, in the holy scriptures, is simply and absolutely stiled God and Father. He is indeed the universal Father of all things, but in a proper and more limited sense, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, as St. Paul most elegantly explains it; 1 Cor. 8: 5, 6. *For though there be that are called Gods, whether in heaven or in earth (as there be gods many, and lords many) but to us there is but one God, the Father, of whom are all things, and we in him; and one Lord Jesus Christ, by whom are all things, and we by him.* Hence it is evident, that the creatures are adorned with the name of the Deity; yet 'tis by the favor and concession of the one supreme God, who is God of Gods, the chief and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all, Eph. 4: 6. to whom all the rest, as to the only supreme God of himself by nature, relate, and are subjected, and whom they obey; and this plurality of subordinate Gods bringeth no confusion, neither is it repugnant to the unity of the divine nature, since every creature praiseth God, whom alone they regard and pant after, as the most high and supreme God, him only they worship and adore; this is evident both in the Old and New Testament, that besides him, there is no other

God. Deut. 6: 4. *Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God is one Lord*; and Deut, 10: 17. *The Lord your God is God of Gods, and Lord of Lords; a great God, and mighty and terrible, which regardeth not persons, nor taketh reward.* And Psal. 50: 1. *The mighty God hath spoken*; and St. Paul, Gal. 4: 8. *Howbeit then when ye knew not God, ye did service unto them, which by nature are no gods*; v. 9. *But now after that ye have known God, how turn ye again to the weak and beggarly elements.* 1 Tim. 6: 13. 16. *Which in his times he shall shew, who is the blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings, and Lord of lords; who only hath immortality, dwelling in the light, which no man can approach unto, whom no man hath seen, nor can see.* 1 Thess. 1: 9, 10. *To serve the living and true God, and to wait for his Son from heaven, whom he raised from the dead, even Jesus.* 1 Tim. 1: 17. *Unto the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only wise God, be honor and glory, for ever and ever, amen.* 1 Tim. 2: 5. *There is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus.* v. 6, *who gave himself a ransom for all.* 1 Tim. 6: 13. *I give thee charge in the sight of God, who quickeneth all things, and before Christ Jesus, who before Pontius Pilate witnessed a good confession.* Tit. 2: 11, 12, 13, 14. *For the grace*

*of God, that bringeth salvation, hath appeared to all men, teaching us that denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously and godly in this present world; looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God, and our Savior Jesus Christ, who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, &c.*

Thus the scripture doth always distinguish between God, and the Son of God; and if you examine it with attention, you will find that the sacred writings do constantly, three or four places only excepted, in the most simple and absolute manner, call the Father God, and the Son his Christ Jesus; but the divinity of the Son is widely different from that of other gods; for which reason, God the Father deified and sanctified others by measure, as adopted Sons; and thus Moses and Cyrus were the particular gods of Pharoah and Israel. But God sanctified Christ the blessed, as his proper Son, and poured out his holy spirit upon him without measure, and filled him with the whole divinity, of whose fulness we all receive. Neither doth this in the least contradict the prophecies, that the Son should be equal with the Father in godhead, power and glory; because all the Deity, glory, and equality of the Son is from God the

Father; as is acknowledged by the Son as the gift of the Father, when he declareth, Matt. 27: 18. *All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth.* Likewise Peter, Acts 2: 36. *That God hath made the same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ.* And Paul Phil. 2: 9, 10. *Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name. That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth.* Heb. 1: 6. *And let all the angels of God worship him.* Eph. 1: 20, 21, 22, 23. *He raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand, in the heavenly places, far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come; and hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the church, which is his body, the fulness of him, that filleth all in all.* Heb. 1: 5. *For unto which of the angels said he at any time, thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee?* v. 8. *Thy throne O God is for ever and ever; a sceptre of righteousness is the sceptre of thy kingdom.* v. 13. *Sit on my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool,* And John, Rev. 5: 12. *Worthy is the Lamb that was slain,*

*to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honor, and glory, and blessing. And therefore St. Paul declareth, that this godhead of the Son, and his equality with the most high God, the Father, is not to be understood in respect of the Father himself, but in respect of the creatures; 1 Cor. 15: 27. For he hath put all things under his feet. But when he saith all things are put under him, it is manifest, that he is excepted, which did put all things under him. v. 28. And when all things shall be subdued unto him, then shall the Son also himself be subject unto him that put all things under him, that God may be all in all.* For although the Son acknowledgeth that he, by the gift of the Father, was made equal to the Father, in might, glory and power, yet he would not abuse that gift of equality, and turn it to tyranny and rapine, according to St. Paul, Phil. 2: 8. *He humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. v. 9. Wherefore God also hath exalted him, and subjected to him all things in heaven, and in earth, and under the earth.* The Almighty Father constituted a God and Lord to be worshipped by all creatures: in short he conferred on his most beloved Son, as much might, power, grace, blessing, glory and godhead as possible; and he bestowed as much

honor on the Son, both in his equality, and in his throne, as the Son could possibly desire; Acts 4: 12. *For there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved.* But in the name of the Son of God, our Lord Jesus Christ, who is the true Lord, and our God, as Thomas; John 20: 28. and Paul and John have most truly confessed. To whom therefore with God the Father, the most high and most merciful God, be praise, honor, and glory, to everlasting ages. *Amen.*

### SECTION IX.

#### *Servetus burnt alive.*

The last act of this tragedy was performed at Geneva, on the twenty-seventh of October, fifteen hundred and fifty-three. We have already seen that Calvin extracted a catalogue of supposed errors from Servetus' books, and drew up the process. The Syndics and council had pronounced sentence against him that he should be burnt alive: and on this day, with many brutal circumstances, the sentence was executed, to the encouragement of catholic cruelty, to the scandal of the reformation, to the offence of all just men, and to the everlasting disgrace

of those ecclesiastical tyrants, who were the chief instruments of such a wild and barbarous deed. 'Many have pretended to apologize for Calvin: but who is John Calvin, and what are his nostrums, which end in tyranny and murder, that the great voice of nature should be drowned in the din of a vain babbling about him?'

Voltaire, who deplores the fate of Servetus, and attributes his death to Calvin, says, , The finishing stroke of this picture of Calvin may be found in a letter written with his own hand, which is still preserved in the castle of Bastic Roland, near Montelinar. It is directed to the Marquis de Poet, high chamberlain to the king of Navarre, and dated September the thirtieth, fifteen hundred and Sixty-one, in which he says, 'Honor, glory, and riches shall be the reward of your pains: but above all do not fail to rid the country of those zealous scoundrels who stir up the people to revolt against us. Such monsters should be exterminated, as I have exterminated Michael Servetus the Spaniard.' What a pity that men, professing themselves reformers, should give such persons as Voltaire so just an occasion of complaint, which they are ever ready to

turn into an argument against divine revelation.

To be a little more particular. When Servetus understood that he was sentenced to be burnt alive, he (as Calvin tells us) earnestly desired, two hours before his execution to see him. Calvin, with two magistrates, who were sent to accompany him, gave him a visit in the prison. Servetus begged his pardon: (it must have been merely for any improper warmth, or harsh expressions he had used in opposing his notions; the asking pardon for these does Servetus credit.) Calvin replied, he never thought of revenging himself for any private injuries, which the prisoner had done him. He added that he had labored even to the hazard of his present life, for the space of sixteen years, to reclaim him from his errors. That he had conversed with him by private letters with great mildness, and continued to use him like a friend, till he found that Servetus bitterly inveighed against him, even to madness, because he had been so free in his friendly reproofs to him. He exhorted the prisoner to ask of the eternal God forgiveness, for having attempted to blot three hypostases out of his essence. When Calvin found that his admonitions made no impression



upon him, (he says) that he told him that he did not presume to be wiser than his master, and according to St. Paul's command went away from that heretic, who was condemned by his own conscience. It is to be remembered that this is Calvin's own account.

He says, further, that when Servetus heard that he was condemned to death, sometimes he appeared speechless, and without any motion; sometimes he fetched deep sighs, and sometimes made bitter lamentations, like a man in distraction; till at length he grew so weak, that he was only able to cry out after the Spanish way, mercy, mercy. Calvin would no doubt give a partial account of these circumstances: and whatever mercy he might desire, he received none at the hands of that celebrated reformer.

Farel attended the doctor to his funeral pile, and had much ado, according to Calvin's account, to make him say, he desired the people should pray for him. Calvin is pleased to make some very illnatured remarks on this circumstance, as, 'how his conscience could permit him even to do that, I cannot conceive; for he wrote with his own hand, that the faith of devils reigned at Geneva; that we had no church, nor God there; because that by the

baptizing of infants we did disown Christ. So rooted was his enmity that the dreadful sufferings of his opponent could not abate it.

Servetus ended his days, amidst the most excruciating sufferings, with firmness and composure, without speaking, or giving the least sign that he repented publishing the book for which he suffered, or that he retracted the opinions he had avowed.

The author of the *Bibliothèque Anglaise* says, 'Champel, or Champey, a small eminence, about a musket shot from Geneva, was then the common place of execution; I had the curiosity to visit the spot, hardly known to any traveller, and to see the very ground on which Servetus expired in the flames.' He might have added, ground rendered sacred by receiving the blood of a martyr to the cause of truth and liberty.

Lubienjecius makes the following remarks on this bloody execution; 'This was indeed a cruel act; and in the opinion of all good men, directly regugnant to the gentle and humble spirit of Christ, but perfectly agreeable to the temper of such who are for drawing down *Boogym* *gean* fire from heaven, in imitation of Elias, who did it for the destruction of some inhospit-

table Samaritans: (only they punished the guilty, but Calvin, the innocent.') Servetus perished in the flames, but he shall rise again to immortality and glory.

## CHAPTER IV.

### PERSECUTION INDEFENSIBLE.

*Sect. 1. Whether it be right for the civil magistrates, or any power on earth, to put men to death for their opinions. Sect. 2. On the same principle as the persecutors of Servetus attempted to defend their conduct, if admitted, every species of persecution might be defended.— Sect. 3. The reformers guilty of manifest inconsistency. Sect. 4. Persecution is irrational. Sect. 5. Persecution is altogether anti-christian. Sect. 6. For christians to persecute each other is highly injurious to the church, and baneful to christianity. Sect. 7. Wise and moderate men, in all ages, have disapproved of persecution. Sect. 8. Persecutors are the real heretics and schismatics.*

INSTEAD of relenting at the recollection of the part he had acted against Servetus, Calvin, undertook to defend the cruel proceedings of the

magistrates of Geneva against him, and to prove that heretics ought to be put to death. After the execution of Servetus he published a book entitled 'A faithful account of the errors of Michael Servetus, with a brief confutation of them, in which is shown that heretics are to be restrained by the sword.' It is said Sebastian Castellio, or Lælius Socinus, confuted this book. Beza answered, and justified the practice of putting heretics to death. His piece was entitled, 'Of punishing heretics by the civil magistrates.' 'Each of these reformers (says Lubienjecius) taking a dart out of the quiver of the church of Rome, and her adherents, to thrust it with a greater fury into the sides of heretics of their own making.'

'The persecutors of Servetus (says Mr. Robinson) were attacked from all parts; by the polite and mild remonstrances of the inimitable Dudith, by the rough and uncourtly reproaches of the honest Castellio, and by many others: but what stung the sanguinary Beza most was what he called a *farrago*, which some, mistaking it for other treatises on the same subject, attribute to Castellio, others, to Lælius Socinus, but which probably was, like the famous *Smectymnus*, the joint work of several wise and well informed persons. Beza was offended because

the authors said he had published a book to justify the murder of heretics, whereas he had only written one to prove they ought to be put to death.'

Christians; in the present day, may be surprised to hear that the reformers wrote in defence of persecution, that they ascribed to the civil magistrates the power of putting heretics to death, and justified the murdering men for their opinions; but it was impossible for them on any other principle to vindicate their own conduct. They had delivered the man they deemed a heretic into the hands of the civil power, they had prosecuted him for heresy as a capital crime, they had instigated the magistrates to condemn him to death, and he had been burnt alive among them. The eyes of the world were upon them; many thoughtful and humane persons disapproved of their rash and cruel proceedings; the burning a man alive for his opinions was likely to prove a foul stain on their character, and the reformation they had effected; they set a high value on their reputation, were anxious to obtain the good opinions of men, wished to be thought to act consistently in all things. What was to be done? They could not bring themselves to acknowledge

they had acted wrong, they repented not of their murderous conduct; consequently, they could not disavow the persecution of those they thought real heretics, the fact was too notorious, the part they had acted too open, for them to deny that they had caused a man to be put to death for his opinions. Still they were desirous of justifying themselves: and only one possible way remained for them to do this, i. e. by proving that it was lawful for the civil magistrates to destroy heretics by fire and sword. This course they pursued. Not that Calvin was over obsequious to the civil magistrates, there were times when he could resist their authority; but in this instance it was convenient for him to magnify their power.

### SECTION I.

*Whether it be right for the civil magistrates, or any power on earth, to put men to death for their opinions.*

Unless it can be proved lawful to burn men for their opinions the persecutors of Servetus cannot be defended. In order to prove that heretics ought to be punished by the civil

magistrates the following points should first be settled.

1. Who are the persons possessed of a judgment sufficiently discriminating and incapable of error, and with authority, to decide what opinions are heretical, and what orthodox? Perhaps even the papists will not all agree in their answer to this enquiry. Some will say the pope, some general councils, some the catholic church at large. Those who contend for the pope's infallibility, will not be able to show that all the popes have agreed in their opinions, consequently some of them must have erred. Those who would place the infallibility in general councils will find a dissonance in the decisions of different councils. Those who contend that the church is never wrong, ought to prove that the church has ever maintained a uniformity of opinion: but the contrary is evidently the fact. Protestants have ever affirmed that popes, councils, and the whole catholic church, are all fallible, and have greatly erred, nor can their affirmation be disproved. The reformers thought themselves qualified to determine what opinions were heretical, and what orthodox; but did not even they differ in some things? Did not they sometimes change their opinions? What



· better claim could they have to infallibility than the pope of Rome, assisted by general councils, and supported by the whole catholic church? Are christian magistrates infallible, that they should take upon them to punish men for certain opinions which they are pleased to call heretical, or have they among the ministers of their party infallible guides to direct their decisions? Those who take upon them to pronounce authoritatively on the opinions of others, and decide what is heresy, and what orthodoxy, ought to show that they are incapable of error in their decisions. An infallible judge should come forward and give evidence of his authority to decide on the truth or falsehood of religious doctrines, before he assumes the prerogative of determining what doctrines are heretical; but such a judge is not to be found among either catholics or protestants; for they are all liable to err: consequently, supposing wrong opinions to be heresy, it is impossible to determine, with infallible certainty, what are the opinions that ought to be branded with that odious name. John Calvin had no more right to pronounce the doctrines of Servetus heretical, than the pope of Rome had to pronounce the doctrines of Calvin heretical, or than Servetus had to pronounce the doctrines of both Calvin

and the pope heretical. Allowing the civil magistrate to have authority to punish heretics; that authority is a mere nullity, so far as relates to opinions; for it is impossible for him to ascertain who are the persons he ought to punish, only as the priest tells him, and the priest is as fallible as the magistrate. Calvin and the reformers would tell him to burn Servetus, and all the antitrinitarian anabaptists, the pope and his cardinals would tell him to burn Calvin, and all the reformists; in fact, had the magistrates been ruled by intolerant priests, and their power been sufficiently extensive, they might have burnt all the christian world. It may be said we are to decide by the scriptures what opinions are heretical, granting this, the decisions of men of different parties will be as various as their different systems. Different parties have assumed the right of determining what opinions are heretical; but until they can show that they are infallible, and invested with superior authority to all others, this assumption ought to be held arrogant, insulting and unjust.—From these remarks it appears, that to brand opinions with the name of heresy, and deem them punishable by the civil magistrate, is manifestly absurd.

2. What civil magistrates have a right to punish heretics? If it be a part of their office, a prerogative which belongs to them as magistrates, to put heretics to death, then it belongs to popish magistrates as much as to protestant, to antitrinitarian as much as to trinitarian: and the magistrates of every party will be justified in burning those who differ from them, and persecution will be rendered universal. O! but none have a right to punish heretics but true christian magistrates. What then? has not every church, whether protestant or popish, thought its magistrates truly christian, especially if devoted to its interest? Could John Calvin suppose the world would believe that there were no truly christian magistrates but those who belonged to the newly formed protestant churches, and that the right of burning heretics belonged solely to them? How could he help seeing that he contended for the very principle on which the church of Rome acted, in those cruel persecutions which he and all the protestants condemned? Either every magistrate has a right to persecute and destroy those whose opinions he thinks erroneous, or no magistrate has that right. Calvin's maxim, if admitted, would prove what himself disallowed, i. e. that popish magistrates had a right to burn

protestants, it would justify all the persecuting laws that were made against heretics in the dark ages of superstition. A principle so absurd and destructive cannot surely be countenanced by any man in the present day: yet let it be remembered it is the only principle on which Calvin and his associates can be justified.

3. By what rule is the civil magistrate to judge of the nature and magnitude of the supposed crime of heresy? Is he to judge by the scriptures? It must be by his own private opinion of the sense of scripture, and his judgment is as fallible as that of the supposed heretic, who also professes to make the scriptures his rule: besides that would be to make his own private opinion a law, and a dissent from it a capital crime: neither will the scriptures authorize the putting of real heretics to death. Is he to judge by the laws made against heresy in the former times of priestcraft and corruption? Those laws would be found fatal to the cause of protestantism, they are acknowledged to have been made when the church had greatly degenerated from the purity of the gospel, and to recognize their authority would be in fact to legitimate those maxims of tyranny by which the papal power was so long upheld.

Is he to judge by the creeds and dogmas of a particular party of christians? That would be to establish another rule of faith and practice besides the scriptures, and what claim can the dogmas of one party of christians have to the honor of being regarded as a rule of faith in preference to those of another? What is the magistrate to do in a case attended with so many insuperable difficulties? Who is to direct his faith and conscience? which among all the discordant systems maintained by professed christians ought to regulate his decisions, in the awful work of proscription and death? To say heretics are to be punished by the civil magistrates, is to impose on them an impracticable task; for it is impossible for them to ascertain who are the real heretics, or what is real heresy.

4. Are civil magistrates invested with dominion over the faith and consciences of christians? If not what right can they have to punish them for their opinions? To contend that heretics, i. e. those who dissent from the majority, ought to be punished by the civil magistrates, is in fact to assert that the magistrate has dominion over the faith and consciences of, at least, the minority, and if over the faith and

consciences of a part why not of the whole body of christians? The right of punishing men for their opinions implies a right to prescribe what they shall believe; it follows that the power which the reformers ascribed to the civil magistrates would constitute them lords over God's heritage, a prerogative which even the apostles disavowed, set aside Christ as the only head, Lord, and lawgiver of the church, and introduce downright popery; as it would be a transfer of the power of the pope to civil governors. If Calvin really believed the magistrates possessed such a power, as he contended they ought to exercise over heretics, he ought to have followed their directions in all things; but it is well known he positively refused to do this; consequently his own conduct refuted the maxims he inculcated with a view to the destruction of those he called heretics. If it be contended that the civil magistrates ought to punish as heretics only those whom the ministers of God's word declare to be such, which is most likely what Calvin and Beza meant, this is to degrade the magistracy into a mere engine of priestcraft, and to render it the mere tool of bigots, to execute their bloody decrees: besides how are the magistrates to know which

of the contending parties are the real ministers of God's word.

Until the foregoing points be settled, it must appear ridiculous to talk of civil magistrates possessing a right to punish heretics: and if they possess no such right it can exist no where upon earth; for there can exist no executive power superior to that of the magistrates.

The notion that heretics are to be punished by the civil magistrates subverts the true design of civil government, and is destructive to the liberties of mankind. Civil government exists merely for civil purposes. It has no business to interfere in matters purely religious, which relate simply to God and the conscience. It has nothing to do with the faith and consciences of men. Its sole end is the security and prosperity of civil society. A man's religious opinions, and the modes of worship he adopts, offer no injury to society, interrupt not the safety, liberty, or prosperity of others; consequently it is a matter with which civil government ought to have no concern. Individually men have no dominion over the opinions and consciences of others; but they have a natural right to exert themselves to prevent what would injure them in their persons or property,

and to promote the general safety and prosperity. Collectively as a nation they are united for the same purposes of general safety and prosperity. They transfer to their governors the power of securing these objects; but they cannot transfer to them, what they do not themselves possess, dominion over the faith and consciences of others. All pretensions to dominion over conscience is treason against society, and against Jesus Christ, the only person appointed to exercise authority over the consciences of men. Whenever civil magistrates assume dominion over the faith of others, and punish them for their supposed heretical opinions, they are guilty of a vile usurpation. To invest civil governors with authority to interfere with the conscience, and punish men for their religious sentiments, is to constitute them odious tyrants, and has a tendency to destroy all liberty.



## SECTION II.

*On the same principle as the persecutors of Servetus attempted to defend their conduct, if admitted, every species of persecution might be defended.*

Let us trace the principle on which the reformers attempted to justify the persecution of Servetus to its natural conclusion, and it will be found to justify every species of persecution. The principle is, that heretics are to be put to death by the civil magistrates. To be a heretic, in their sense of the word, is to maintain opinions which the prevailing party think erroneous. Those who have the power of persecuting, claim the right of judging what opinions are heretical. Those whom they denounce, the magistrates are to destroy. On this principle every species of persecution has been practised. At Geneva protestantism was the established system, the protestant preacher's sustained the character of ministers of God's word, those who opposed their opinions they denounced as heretics, and persuaded the magistrates to condemn them to die: accordingly they condemned Doctor Servetus and burnt

him alive, and Calvin and Beza contended they acted right. In Italy, France, Spain, and many other countries, popery was established; of course the pope, his cardinals, and all the popish priests were thought ministers of God's word, those who opposed their doctrines they denounced as heretics, and delivered over to the civil power to be burned. Who will dare to say they had not as much right to judge of heresy, and burn those they thought heretics, as John Calvin and the magistrates of Geneva? The cruelties of the court of inquisition, and all the religious murders committed in popish countries, are defensible, if the principle be admitted that heretics are to be destroyed, and that the prevailing party have a right to determine who are heretics. In attempting to justify themselves, the reformers adopted a mode of reasoning which would equally justify the cruel massacre of their protestant brethren by the papists. It is impossible to vindicate the persecutors of Geneva, without at the same time vindicating the whole tribe of religious murderers, and justifying persecution by whatever party practised.

## SECTION III.

*The reformers guilty of manifest inconsistency.*

Men who claim liberty themselves and deny it to others, who practise what they condemn, are very inconsistent characters. This is in some degree the case with all persecutors, as they use a liberty which they will not allow to others; but it was most glaringly the case with respect to the persecutors of Servetus. Calvin and his associates had claimed liberty for themselves, they had dared to oppose the pope and the whole catholic church, they had boldly avowed opinions which the church of Rome condemned, and established a system of ecclesiastical polity agreeable to their own views, without regarding how dissimilar it might be to what the christian world had for ages adopted; yet they would not allow those who differed from them the liberty of judging for themselves, nor suffer them to oppose their notions with impunity: they condemned the papists for burning those who opposed popery; yet they themselves burnt Servetus for opposing some of their doctrines. In condemning others for using the same liberty which *they*

had long exercised, of judging for themselves and publishing their own views on religious subjects, they condemned themselves; for either they were culpable in setting up their judgment in opposition to the whole catholic church, or they were culpable in restraining others from taking the same liberty as they had done.—They acted like tyrants, who will bear no control themselves, but who rule over others with a rod of iron. Again, they condemned themselves, when they condemned the catholics for persecuting those who differed from them, seeing *they* did the same thing. Thus the persecutors of Servetus stand convicted of injustice on their own premises, and are condemned out of their own mouths.

#### SECTION IV.

##### *Persecution is irrational.*

It is impossible to defend persecution on any rational ground. Reason revolts at the idea of punishing men for their opinions. It is irrational, because, if the persecuted be in error, persecution is not calculated to inform the mind, or produce a conviction of truth; its tendency

is to confirm them in those opinions in defence of which they suffer. Dungeons and fetters, gibbets and devouring flames, are no way calculated to enlighten the understanding; and till the understanding be enlightened men will continue in their mistakes. It is irrational, because not calculated to retard the progress of those opinions in support of which the persecuted become martyrs; it is rather calculated to give them a wider spread; for it gives them greater publicity; the sufferings of the persecuted excite attention and pity, and many will be the more anxious to become acquainted with their sentiments. It is irrational, because, though it may make some hypocrites, through the fear of suffering, it can make no sincere converts to the cause of the persecutors; they will rather be abhorred by all sensible and humane persons for the cruelty they exercise upon their opponents, and their doctrines will be the more disliked so far as they are supposed to produce such unchristian conduct. It is irrational, because it is a substitution of brutal force, pains and tortures, in the place of reason and sober argument, which it aims at crushing by the strong arm of power, and a system of terror. It is the more irrational if the persecutors have truth on their side, and the persecuted be in

error; for truth is able to maintain itself by sober argument, and can derive no advantage from the persecution of its opposers; on the contrary it is always disgraced and injured when the unholy weapons of the bigot and the persecutor are forced into its service. Thus on the supposition that the persecuted are in error persecution is irrational; but when it is remembered how often the victims of persecution have been on the side of truth, how seldom, if ever, truth has been with the persecutor, and that there can be no infallible certainty on either side, as all are liable to err, persecution must appear a mixture of insanity and brutality.

### SECTION V.

#### *Persecution is altogether antichristian.*

Christianity gives not the least countenance to persecution in any form. It is altogether an antichristian practice, because directly contrary to the spirit and example of Jesus Christ: he was meek and lowly, mild and gentle, kind and compassionate towards all men: he would not suffer those to be persecuted who refused to receive him: he had many persecutors, but he

ever rendered them good for evil, praying for them even when dying on the cross: nothing that gives the least countenance to persecution can be discovered in any part of his spirit or conduct; it is in direct opposition to the example he hath left us. It is an antichristian practice, because directly opposite to the spirit and precepts of the gospel: the spirit of the gospel is a spirit of love: the New Testament requires us to love all men, even our enemies, and it is impossible we should persecute and destroy those we love: it enjoins us to be gentle towards all men, in meekness instructing those who oppose themselves: it prohibits persecution by commanding us not to render evil for evil to any man, but contrariwise blessing. It is an antichristian practice, because its tendency is to extinguish the genuine spirit of christianity, destroy the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and bring us under a most grievous yoke of bondage, and because it violates the command of Christ, that those who profess his name should love one another as he hath loved them, and it is contrary to the example of the holy apostles and first christians. The persecutor resembles the unbelieving Saul of Tarsus, when breathing out threatenings and slaughter against the disciples of Jesus;

not Paul the faithful servant of Christ, and the apostle of the Gentiles. Every part of genuine christianity has a tendency to life; but persecution makes havock with the church of God and scatters around firebrands and death. No two things can be more opposite than genuine christianity and the spirit and practice of persecution. Persecution is the worst part of antichristianism. The symbolical mother of harlots is said, in the Apocalypse, to be drunken with the blood of the saints and martyrs, and every persecutor is a partaker with her and shares in her intoxication; consequently must expect to be a partaker of her plagues: as he beats his fellow servants he must expect his portion with the unbelievers. The spirit of persecution is the spirit of antichrist, as it shows a dereliction of the mind that was in Christ, a destitution of the temper of the gospel, and subverts its genuine influences. The practice of persecution is a leading characteristic of the antichristian church: the persecutor has not the mark of God's children, but that of his enemies. It is impossible to defend persecution without defending what is irrational and antichristian. Popery is no further destroyed than the practice of persecution is laid aside, and its spirit eradicated. Whatever particular system



men adopt, so far as they are persecutors they are antichristians.

### SECTION VI.

*For christians to persecute each other is highly injurious to the church, and baneful to christianity.*

The plea for persecution has often been that it is necessary to preserve uniformity, and prevent a contrariety in doctrine, and schisms in the church. It has never yet, however, been proved that uniformity, were it attainable, is necessary to the union, peace, and edification of christians; nor that a diversity of opinions ever did any harm, when not associated with bigotry and a persecuting spirit. But however necessary uniformity may be thought, ages of experience teach that it is not to be obtained by persecution. In the most persecuting times there have still been many nonconformists, and much diversity of sentiment. Persecution, so far from healing the wounds of the church has made them much deeper. It cannot fail to be highly injurious, because it destroys peace and union among those who differ, rends in pieces the church, and instead of preventing schisms

produces them. It corrupts the minds of christians, by inspiring animosity, hatred, and wrath, corroding the best feelings of the heart, producing ferocity of manners, and turning what should be the temple of God and the habitation of every virtue, into a scene of carnage and misery. It is baneful to christianity, because it interrupts the progress of christian knowledge, by preventing free enquiry, and is incompatible with its genuine spirit and practice; and because it greatly scandalizes the gospel, and fills the mouths of unbelievers with arguments against divine revelation. It deforms the most excellent of all institutions, and counteracts the influence of christianity in the world. Persecutors are the greatest troublers of the church, the fire of their unholy zeal tends to consume it, and the greatest enemies to the success of the gospel, their ferocious and cruel temper and conduct cannot fail to disgrace it.

## SECTION VII.

*Wise and moderate men, in all ages, have disapproved of persecution.*

If some men of great parts and learning have been persecutors it arose from their ignorance of the principles of liberty, their being influenced by prejudice and superstition, and their suffering themselves to be guided by a blind zeal for established customs. No man whose learning and great parts led him uniformly to act with wisdom and moderation ever was a persecutor; for persecution is contrary to good sense: how abhorrent then must it be to good sense, refined by literature and science? Gamaliel, though not totally free from jewish prejudices, had the good sense to perceive the folly of persecution, *Refrain from these men, (says he) and let them alone; for if this counsel, or this work be of men, it will come to nought; but if it be of God, ye cannot overthrow it, lest haply ye be found even to fight against God.* It had been well if all christians had reasoned as wisely as this jewish doctor. The town-clerk of Ephesus, who restrained the persecutors of Paul, seems to have been a man of similar good sense.

Our Lockes, our Miltons, and a long list of worthies, who have been an honor to human nature, were in their day the determined opposers of persecution, and the champions for christian liberty. Their great souls, enriched with various learning, abhorred the idea of making a man a criminal for his opinions, and even of restraining him from the free communication of them. Persecutors must be men, who either have their feelings benumbed by ignorance, or who are besotted by superstition, or blinded by prejudice, or whom some vile passion or corrupt interest governs. As cruelty is not natural to man, it is most of all unnatural to the christian, and persecution is cruelty; the mind must be strangely blinded, and the heart deeply depraved, before a man can become a persecutor.

### SECTION VIII,

*Persecutors are the real heretics and schismatics.*

After all the outcry which persecutors have made about heresy and schism, it may be worth while to enquire how far themselves are guilty of the evils about which they have made so much noise, and to prevent which they have spilled so

much innocent blood. As the word heresy means a sect, a sectarian spirit is a heretical spirit; sectarian rules of faith, such as the creeds of particular parties, when the belief of them is made a term of communion, and penalties annexed to the rejection of them, are real heretical principles; those who manifest that spirit, and maintain those rules of faith, excommunicating and condemning all who differ from them, are the real heretics. This all persecutors do. They make their own party to be exclusively the church of God, they set up their own notions as the standard of orthodoxy, and exclude those who will not receive them and be of their party, subjecting them so far as they have power to pains and penalties; therefore persecutors are real heretics. A schism is a division, but bigots and persecutors, by establishing unscriptural terms of communion, by shutting out of the church those who differ from them, divide the church of God, and are true schismatics.

Under every view in which it can be examined persecution is indefensible. It derives no countenance from either reason or scripture; it violates all the precepts of the gospel and is a scandal to the christian name; it is destruc-

tive to the peace and union of christians, and  
abhorrent to the best feelings of human nature.  
The persecutor acts on false principles, his zeal  
is unchristian, and his conduct murderous.

## CHAPTER V.

### AN ACCOUNT OF THE WRITINGS OF SERVETUS.

*Sect. 1. His books against the trinity and other reputed orthodox notions. Sect. 2. Servetus' Edition of the Bible. Sect. 3. What the Doctor wrote on the circulation of the blood. Sect. 4. His Edition of Ptolemy's Geography. Sect. 5. A specimen of his epistolary writings.*

The destruction of the writings of Servetus renders it impossible to give a full and accurate account of their contents; but such an account as I have been able to collect I will lay before the reader. Had his enemies spared his works, and permitted mankind to judge of their contents for themselves, this account might have been more correct and circumstantial. To be sure in that case it might not have been possible to have blasted his reputation, by disguising his opinions, in the manner they did. Whatever temporary advantages the persecutors of the Doctor might gain to their cause, by

consigning him and his books to the devouring flames, they erected a monument of lasting infamy to themselves, and fixed a foul stain on the cause they attempted to promote by such vile means.

Had the life of Servetus been spared he might have corrected some mistakes, for it is not pretended that his writings were free from mistakes, he might have explained his views in a more intelligible and unexceptionable manner. It seems he was anxious, several years before his death, to recover some of his writings out of the hands of Calvin that he might correct them ; but though that reformer could consent to send the Doctor's letters to the papists, that they might be enabled to convict him of heresy, he would not return them to the author that he might amend their contents.

Had not the life of Servetus been violently taken away, it seems he would have published many other things. Lubienjecius says '*He was about to publish many discourses, with these titles, if I am not mistaken, viz. Of the right understanding of the scriptures: Of the source of Apostacy from the Apostolical Doctrine: Of the power of Truth: Of the true knowledge of God: Of the error of the Trinity: Of the true*



*Holy Spirit : Of the exaltation of the man Jesus : Of the nature and ministry of Angels : Of Zeal and Knowledge : Of the Efficacy of Faith : Of the Power of Charity : Of the Body, Soul, and Spirit : Of the Born and Regenerated : Of Vocation and Election : Of Prescience and Predestination : Of human Works and Ceremonies : Of the Baptism of Water and of the Spirit : Of the Lord's Supper : Of Sin and Satisfaction : Of Justification : Of the Fear and Love of God : Of the true Church : Of the Head and Members of it : Of the sleep of the Saints : Of the Resurrection of the dead, and of the Change of the Living : Of the Day of Judgment : Of the Blessedness of the Elect, &c."*

Thus, it appears, Servetus had proposed continuing his exertions, to propagate what he believed to be the truth of God, to counteract the influence of error and superstition, and promote the knowledge, virtue, and happiness of mankind; but he was arrested in the midst of his labors, by the malignancy of bigotry and uncharitableness, he was cut off from the earth, and the friends of truth and liberty have to weep over his ashes.

## SECTION I.

*His books against the trinity and other reputed orthodox notions.*

Servetus' first work was entitled *De Trinitatis Erroribus*. It was divided into seven books, consisting of 119 leaves in 8vo. In this work, we are told, he undertook to show, in the first place, that the words *Jesus*, and *Christ*, and *Son of God*, denote only a man ; and endeavored to prove it by several passages of scripture. He explained many other passages agreeable to his system, and answered the objections of the orthodox. Hence it appears that he believed Christ to be literally one of the human race. It is not however to be inferred that he supposed him to be only a common man, it fully appears that he believed him to be the anointed of God, and, in his office and character, far superior to all others.

It is said that in the latter part of this work Servetus expressed himself very obscurely : it is not surprising that this should be the case, considering the disadvantages under which he labored, and that he was but a youth at the

time when he wrote it. The strongest and best culvated mind, in its efforts to disentangle truth from the false conceptions, and multifarious errors, which have long been entwined about it, is often much embarrassed. The first essays of the brightest intellect will, in some points, appear obnubilated. After all, had we the entire works of this great man before us, it is possible those passages which have been thought obscure, when compared with the context and general strain of his reasoning might be rendered more lucid. At any rate it ill becomes those who contend for the mysterious doctrine of the trinity, and that we must believe what we do not understand, to reproach any writer because he is sometimes obscure; for with them obscurity is sblimity, nor can any thing be more obscure than their own system.

Servetus is said to have asserted that 'Christ was præformed in the divine mind; he was a certain mode of being himself there, which mode God disposed of in himself, that he might make himself known to us; i. e. by describing the effigies of Jesus Christ in himself.' It is not easy to say precisely what sense he meant to convey in this passage, and we have not an opportunity of comparing it with the

context. It would however be unreasonable to suppose he intended to contradict what he had so unequivocally expressed respecting the proper humanity of Christ. It is possible his meaning might be, that in those passages of scripture which are supposed to imply the pre-existence and deity of Christ, nothing more is meant than that his existence was present to the divine mind, which comprehends all things that now are or ever shall be; that his mode of being, as to his peculiar character and work, was determined in that mind: and that in the manifestations of himself, under the former dispensations, by promises, prophecy, and symbolical appearances under the law, God described the effigies of what should be realized in Christ, or through the dispensation of the gospel. It is said he called this the face of God, and the word that was made flesh. By which it is likely he meant no more than that what God hath revealed by Christ is the brightest display of his glory ever afforded to men, and that the realizing his gracious designs and promises, in the revelation afforded by him, is what is intended by the word being made flesh. It is not easy to suppose, after what he has said about Christ as being properly a man, he could intend to

represent him as existing in God, any otherwise than as other things which are future existed in him, i. e. in his purpose and counsel, after which he worketh all things. Eph. 1: 10.

It seems, in this work, Servetus called the three divine persons a mere imagination, a chimera, metaphysical Gods, &c. and it is pretty certain he thought them to be such. His using such language was thought most irreverent by the reputed orthodox. It was much easier for them to make an outcry about irreverence, heresy, and blasphemy, than it was to substantiate their own notion of three distinct persons in one undivided being. Full of youthful ardor, his mind enriched with literature and science, and imbued with the love of truth, our author knew not how to withhold from things those names which he thought most suitable to express their true nature; he was above disguising his thoughts, and seems to have known how to give point and energy to his composition.

Servetus' second work contained two books of Dialogues about the trinity, and four short chapters concerning the righteousness of the kingdom of Christ. This work is said to have contained only six sheets in 8vo. It seems to

have been principally intended to give a more correct statement of what he had before published. We have already noticed that in this work he retracted some things, as to the manner in which he had expressed himself, in his former publication. This showed true greatness of mind. Persons of little information and weak powers are seldom forward to retract what they have once asserted. It is honorable for a man to correct his mistakes, and acknowledge his defects. There have been men who have boasted that they never changed any of their religious opinions, from the time they first made a public profession of the gospel: such boasting is not much to their credit. It is not in the nature of things possible for a man to attain the full knowledge of the truth, and the most correct mode of expressing it, at once. All knowledge is attained gradually. Our first religious notions are generally a mixture of truth and error. Why do men continually search the scriptures, and study theological subjects, if not to detect their errors, to acquire fresh information, to correct their present views, and attain a more exact and comprehensive knowledge of divine things? An uninformed bigot will be very reluctant to say 'I was

wrong;' but he whose object is the promotion of truth, not the maintaining of a particular system, will not be backward to acknowledge his mistakes. When a man changes his ideas, he in effect says, he thinks himself wiser than he was before.

The four chapters concerning the righteousness of the kingdom of Christ had the following titles. 1. Of Justification. 2. Of the kingdom of Christ. 3. The law and gospel compared. 4. Of Charity.

The last and chief work of Servetus was also written against the trinity and other false notions, and those superstitious practices which then prevailed among christians. It was entitled *Christianismi Restitutio*. It contained seven hundred and thirty-four pages 8vo. This work we are told was divided into six parts, of which the following are said to be the contents. ' 1. Of the divine trinity, that there is not an illusion of three invisible beings in it; but the real manifestation of the substance of God, and communication of his spirit. In seven books. The two last are written by way of dialogue. 2. Of the faith of Christ, and the righteousness of his kingdom, excelling that of the law, and of charity. In three books. 3. Of regeneration

from above, and the reign of antichrist. In four books. 4. Thirty epistles to John Calvin preacher at Geneva. 5. Sixty signs of the reign of antichrist, and his discovery just now at hand. 6. Of the mystery of the trinity, and discipline of the ancients, being an apology to Philip Melancthon and his colleagues.' The whole work is said to contain a delineation of what the writer thought of the discipline of the New Testament, along with that of the church of Rome, and the Lutherans and Calvinists in contrast.

In this work Servetus, we are told, attempted to show that Christ is not a creature, and has not finite power; but in this representation there is probably some mistake. He might, in speaking of the generation and dignity of Christ, express himself incoherently; but it is not likely he would speak of him as the uncreated and infinite Jehovah, seeing he clearly expressed the contrary in his dying speech, asserting that he derived every thing from the Father. Or he might use the words in some peculiar sense, which the context would determine, consistent with his avowed opinion that Christ was properly a man, and derived every thing from the Father. It is clear from his dying speech, that when he called Christ true God he meant no



more than that he was elevated to a rank above all creatures, that divine powers were delegated to him, and that he was God by office, not by nature. Nothing but an examination of the work itself could enable us to give a correct statement of its contents, and fully to detect any misrepresentations which have been given of it; but the work itself is not to be obtained. It is said a part of the original manuscript was some years ago in the library of the celebrated Mr. Gaignat, which was sold by auction in April, 1769. But we are not told how it was known to be part of the original manuscript. Mr. de Hase, a Bremen divine, affirms, that he never saw any person who could say that he had seen it in print except Sandius, who affirmed, that it was in the library of the Landgrave of Hesse. Mr. D'Artigny says 'That the copies are become so rare, that there is scarcely four or five known in the world;' but he does not tell us where those four or five are to be found. As to professed manuscript copies, which may have passed through the hands of the enemies of Servetus, they may have been corrupted; consequently there can be but little dependence on them; could such a professed copy of the work at large be obtained.

In his *Christianismi Restitutio*, the Doctor is said to have taken the church of Rome to be the beast mentioned in the Apocalypse, and to have expressed his abhorrence of the doctrines and practices of that church. Of which the following passages have been given as a specimen.

‘The Devil, with wonderful artifice, suggests to the minds of papists the doctrine of making prayers for the souls of the dead, that men may neglect the duties of a good life while they live.’

‘Is it not the vainest conjecture in the world, a fiction of demons, and a certain sign of anti-christ, to erect the supremacy of the pope, upon some passages only of Peter’s faith? To put such a wrong sense upon places of scripture, as to make them speak in favor of idols and cowles, and sacrilegiously to foist into the book of God, such a variety of traditions is monstrous wickedness. In vain is God worshipped by the papists, through the doctrine of the pope, and the commandments of men. Mat. 15.’

‘Was Peter to see the abominable comedy, as it is acted by his successors, with mitres, cowles, and shaved pates, with all their pageant vestments, and all the people so egregiously guilty of idolatry, he would be struck with

astonishment to the last degree. In their babylonish mass there is no eucharist, no supper of communion, no charity, no participation of the body of Christ. But as in the synagogue of Satan, the pitiful priest breaks a little bit of the unleavened host, and privately devours it, saying corban, i. e. this shall also do you good; so the priests at Rome do no more.'

He concludes his discourse concerning the sixty signs of antichrist, with these words, 'Whoever believes that the pope is antichrist, will also believe, that a popish trinity, infant baptism, and the other sacraments of the papacy, are doctrines of demons. O Christ Jesus, Son of God, most merciful redeemer, who hast so often delivered thy people from their miseries, deliver us miserable men, from these babylonsih fetters and shackles of antichrist, from his hypocrisy, tyranny and idolatry. Amen.'

These passages show that Servetus was no less zealous against the errors of the papists than against those of the protestants, and that he regarded those things which he opposed in the latter as derived by them from the former.

## SECTION II.

*Servetus' Edition of the Bible.*

The edition of the bible which Servetus revised, was the latin version of Pagninus, printed in folio, by Hugo de la Parte, in 1542. As the Doctor's preface is somewhat curious, and gives an idea of what he thought a right mode of interpreting prophecy, I will insert it at length.

‘MICHAEL VILLANOVANUS to the Reader.’

‘We are taught by that wise man, Jesus the Son of Sirach, in the beginning of his apocryphal book, called Ecclesiasticus: That the hebrew tongue, when translated into any other language, is defective, and the spirit of it is almost lost; well observing, that the lively energy of spirit, emphasis of expression, harmony, antitheses, allusions, and the like, cannot be exactly kept up in our translations; from whence, for good reason, most, both ancients and moderns, who have, with the greatest care, interpreted the scriptures, have never come up to the whole sense; especially since they who are ignorant of the affairs and customs of the

hebrews, give very easily into the contempt of the historical and literal sense, which is the only certain sign of any thing future, from whence it comes to pass, that they ridiculously, and to no manner of purpose, pursue the mystical sense every where. Wherefore I would desire you again and again, christian reader, to get the knowledge of the hebrew, in the first place, and after that, diligently to apply yourself to the study of the jewish history, before you enter upon the reading of the prophets, for each of the prophets pursued, according to the letter, their history, both as to that part which points out things to come, and as to that in which the mysteries of Christ, according to the spirit, are hid; for all things turned up to them in types, as St. Paul says, and the testimony of Jesus Christ, as saith St. John, is a spirit of prophecy; although there was another sense of the prophets then, according to the letter, as the course of their history led them. But if any one denies that sense to be truly literal, because the force of the expression does not always serve to the purpose, I will readily allow it him. This, however, ought to be considered, that the hebrew language is very full of hyperboles, and other great mysteries are contained therein. It must be considered too, that if the literal sense

is not mentioned, yet there is some shadow of future verity, as under the shade of David, some truth belonging to Christ alone, darts forth with a shining lustre; for from his histories in the Psalms, there are several occasions taken of predicting many passages concerning Christ. It is indeed upon this account, that he is said to be a type of Christ. After the same manner of paint, it is said of Solomon, I will be to him a father; and of the Israelitish people, it is said, out of Egypt have I called my son, when that in truth agreed to Christ alone; so that we may say, that the literal prophetic sense refers to Christ; to which we may add, that this book is said to be written within and without; and there is a twofold face in the scriptures, in like manner as one sword has two edges. The force of scripture is very general, and under the antiquity of the declining letter, it contains so much fresh vigor of the enlivening spirit, that when one sense is collected from it, it would be monstrous to neglect the other: more especially, since that historical sense discloses the mystical of its own accord; from whence it is, that we always endeavor to search out, though it costs never so much pains, that old literal or historical sense (so generally neglected) by having recourse to the *Scholia*; so that the mystical

sense might become known to be the true sense, the rather by its type; for the mystical sense is the scope of all, viz. Jesus Christ shaded under such types and figures, whom the blinded Jews, for that reason, do not see; which shade or veil being taken away, we all, with open face, clearly see our God. In which very thing, as also in the version of our *Pagninus*, we have exerted ourselves, after all his annotations, to the last degree. Annotations, I say, of which he hath left us a vast number, nor are they only annotations, but the exemplar itself, corrected in innumerable places, by his own hand: from all which I dare affirm, that the sentences are now become much more entire and perfect, and nearer; by far, to the verity of the hebrew tongue. However, this is submitted to the judgment of those, and of those only (for no others can be judges) who are well versed in the hebrew tongue, and the jewish ecclesiastical history. Whatever advantage therefore you get, reader, from this edition, pay your grateful acknowledgments for it; first to the great God, and then to Hugo de la Parte, a citizen of Lyons, by whose expense and labors the contents are made public. Farewel.'

Next to the preface written by Servetus, followed two others; the first by *Johannes Nicolaus*

*Victorius*, and the second by *Pagninus*. This last is to be found in the other editions of that version, but the preface of *Victorius* appeared only in this edition.

Servetus notes are said generally to contain a clear exposition of the hebrew words; and sometimes historical remarks. The following extracts may give the reader an idea of his mode of explaining scripture.

Upon Psalm 1. he says, 'The impious counsel of Ahithophel was the occasson of this Psalm, and likewise of the five following.'

Psalm 2: 7. *The Lord said unto me, thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee.* 'The apostle Paul refers the expression this day, to the day of Christ's resurrection, in like manner as David, when he escaped from his enemies, is said to be born this day, and at length to be made a king this day.'

Psalm 8: 5. *Thou hast made him a little lower than the angels, &c.* 'Than angels, i. e. than the gods, or illustrious men, to whom David, by his persecutions was become inferior; David a type of Christ in this, that he might afterwards be crowned.'

Psalm 45: 6. *Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever.* 'The throne of Solomon is said to



be everlasting, to prefigure the throne of Christ, and Solomon is called God, as Moses and Cyrus were; but the reality is in Christ alone.'

Psalm 69: 21. *They gave me gall for meat, and in my thirst they gave me vinegar to drink.* 'This Nabal did literally, 1 Sam. 25, when he gave to David's messengers sneers and curses instead of proper refreshment, in return for all his favors to him. For the testimony of Jesus Christ is the spirit of prophecy.'

Psalm 72: 5. *They shall fear thee as long as the sun and moon endure, throughout all generations.* 'The hyperbole belongs to Solomon, the truth to Christ: many things were spoken of great men in antiquity in a manner too sublime to be true of them, from whence it appears that the spirit of prophecy pointed somewhere else.'

Psalm 110. *The Lord said unto my Lord.* 'To Solomon whom David calls Lord, as a type of Christ, so great a kingdom being to be transferred to him; for David knew that from him should descend the Son of God, that should be the Lord of the world, therefore under the type of his beloved Son, he called him Lord; and in the place before quoted, Solomon is said to sit upon the throne of God, in his strength, at the right hand of God, viz. in a shadow.'

*Until I make thine enemies thy footstool.—*  
 ‘1 Kings 5. Solomon repeats the words literally.’

*Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchizedec,* ‘who was king and priest at once. From whence Solomon also sometimes officiated as a priest.’

Isa. 7: 14. *Behold a virgin shall conceive, and bear a Son, &c.* ‘This was true according to the letter of Abias then with child, and about to bring forth Ezechias, who was called the strength of God and Immanuel; and before whose reign the two kings, who were in hostility with Judea, were both destroyed.’

Isa 9: 2. *The people that walked in darkness have seen a great light.* ‘From the light which Hezekiah, a type of Christ, brought to an oppressed people, the prophet is carried away to the immense and eternal light of Christ.’

Isa. 19: 20. *And he shall send them a Savior.* ‘That is Hezekiah; for the Egyptians having been greatly oppressed by the Assyrians, when they saw him have so great a victory over the Assyrians, praised the LORD, and entered into a treaty with them at the same time; all which things belong more sublimely to Christ.’

Isa. 40: 2. *The voice of one crying in the wilderness.* ‘The voice of the prophet was directed

to the empire of Cyrus, to the end that a way for the Israelites, in their return from Babylon, might be made through any deserts under his dominions, from whence the prophet takes occasion to allude to Christ. See Jeremiah 31.'

Isa. 41. *Who raiseth up the righteous man from the east, &c.* 'The righteous man, i. e. Cyrus, who was going to execute the justice of God in the destruction of Babylon.'

Isa. 49. *And he said is it a small matter that thou art my sercant, &c.* 'God comforts the afflicted prophet, by telling him, that his prophecy should enlighten the gentile world; for what was to be atchieved by Cyrus, was to gain credit to his prophecy; but these things, in a more sublime manner, belong to Christ; however, the mystical sense doth not exclude the literal, though this be much inferior to that.'

Isa. 47, *And kings shall be thy nursing fathers.* 'These words were accomplished in Ezra, Nehemiah, Esther, and Nebuchadnezzar; which last did homage to Daniel.'

Isa. 53. *Who hath belicved our report.* 'Something incredible as to Cyrus, when at the same time there is a great mystery couched under it, viz. that under the mean type of historical

matters, the sublime secrets of Christ are concealed,'

'In the context he is said to be wounded for our transgressions. As if the prophet had deplored the death of Cyrus, for being slain a sacrifice for the sins of the people, for which they fared much worse under Cambyses, because then the building of the temple, which had been begun under Cyrus, was not only stopped, but demolished; Dan. 9. Whereas this gave a handle to the prophet of preaching the sufferings of Christ, to whom alone the sublimity and verity of these expressions relate.'

Ezek. 9. *And the glory of the God of Israel was gone up from the Cherub, where he was, to the threshold of the house.* 'Here is a translation of the glory of God, from the temple of stone, to that man the true temple Jesus Christ, who is also God, far above the Cherubs themselves.'

Dan. 9. *From the going forth of the commandment, to restore and to build Jerusalem unto Messiah the prince shall be seven weeks.* 'From the going forth of the commandment from God to me, about the restoring and building of Jerusalem unto Cyrus the prince, the Christ of God, are seven weeks; and in sixty-two weeks

the streets and the wall shall be built again even in troublous times; and after sixty-two weeks Cyrus shall be slain, and brought to nought; and Cambyses, successor to Cyrus, shall destroy and desolate the building, but Darius shall first confirm the covenant: after whom shall again follow the stupendous abomination of Antiochus, and there shall an end be put to the Jewish state and policy.'

Zachariah 3. *For behold I will bring forth my servant the branch.* 'I will make my servant Zerubabel the branch, to come, who is the true branch of David, and contains in himself the branch of Christ our king.'

I shall not undertake to prove that Servetus has given the true sense of scripture in the passages quoted; he was but a man, therefore capable of erring, and at a time when so little had been done towards the right interpretation of the jewish prophecies, many of which are very difficult to explain even in the present day, it would have been wonderful if he, or any other person, had given the true sense in every instance. He no doubt gave what he thought the true meaning, and however much he might be mistaken, his mistakes ought not to have been construed into a capital crime.

The reader may be convinced by the preceding extracts that he did not mean to deny that Jesus Christ is spoken of in the prophecies of the Old Testament, nor to assert that he is no further concerned in them than as his actions were figuratively represented by historical facts. It is true he considered the prophecies, in general, as having a proper literal sense in the history of the Israelites; but some he referred more directly to Christ. On the words, *Thy throne, O God, is for ever*, he says, 'The reality is in Christ alone.' On those, *They shall fear thee as long as the sun and moon endure*, &c. he says, 'The hyperbole belongs to Solomon, the truth to Christ,' and adds, 'many things are spoken of great men in antiquity, in too sublime a sense to be true of them, from whence it appears that the spirit of prophecy pointed somewhere else,' meaning to Christ. Again he says, 'the prophet when speaking of Hezekiah was carried away to the immense and eternal light of Christ.' In another place he says, 'All which things more sublimely belong to Christ.' Again, 'This gave an handle to the prophet, of preaching the sufferings of Christ.' Yet he has been charged with denying that the jewish prophecies had any direct reference to Christ: how

unjustly, the impartial reader may easily determine.

### SECTION III.

*What Servetus wrote on the circulation of the blood.*

Of the Doctor's professional writings we can give no particular account; but that he was the first physician who wrote on the circulation of the blood, cannot well be disputed. In his *Christianismi Restitutio* he introduced the subject. The passage, we are informed by his historian, may be seen in a book of *Dr. Wotton's*. [page 229. Am. 1697] concerning ancient and modern learning; from which work he quotes as follows.

'Since the ancients have no right to so noble a discovery, as that of the circulation of the blood; it may be worth while to enquire, to whom of the moderns the glory of it is due; for this is also exceedingly contested. The first step that was made towards it was the finding that the whole mass of the blood passes through the lungs, by the pulmonary artery and vein.

‘The first that I could ever find who had a distinct idea of this matter, was Michael Servetus, a Spanish physician, who was burnt for Arianism, at Geneva, near one hundred and forty years ago. Well had it been for the church of Christ, if he had wholly confined himself to his own profession! His sagacity in this particular, before so much in the dark, gives us great reason to believe, that the world might then have had just cause to bless his memory. In a book of his entitled, *Christianismi Restitutio*, printed in the year 1553, he clearly asserts, that the blood passes through the lungs, from the left to the right ventricle of the heart, and not through the partition which divides the two ventricles, as was at that time commonly believed. How he introduces it, or in which of the six discourses into which he divides his book, it is to be found I know not; having never seen the book myself.

Mr. Charles Barnard, a very learned and eminent Surgeon of London, who did me the favor to communicate this passage to me (set down in the margin at length) which was transcribed out of Servetus, could inform me no further, only that he had it from a learn-



ed friend of his, who had himself copied it from Servetus.'

The author of the history of Servetus adds, 'Having (since Mr. Wotton's quotation) seen another, viz. in the *Bibliographiæ Anatomicæ specimen*, or a catalogue of almost all the authors who have expressly or occasionally been famous in anatomy, down from Hypocrates to Harvey; by James Douglas M. D. Soc. R. S. in 8vo, p. 85. He chuses to give the latter.'

'Dr. Douglas observes, that Servetus was apprized of the circulation of the blood; and it was from thence, no doubt, that he says, that passage was found in the 5th book of Servetus' Restitution of Christianity.'

'Servetus saith, that there are three sorts of spirits in the human body, viz. *natural*, *vital*, and *animal*, which are not in reality three, but two distinct spirits only: the arteries communicating by *anastomosis*, the vital spirit to the veins, in which it is called *natural*. The first spirit then is the blood, whose seat is in the liver, and in the veins of the body; the second is the *vital* spirit, whose seat is in the heart and the arteries; the third is the *animal* spirit, whose seat is the brain and nerves.

‘That we may therefore conceive how the blood comes to be the very life; we must first know, that the substantial generation of the vital spirit itself is made and nourished by the inspired air, and the most subtil blood. The vital spirit hath its origin from the left ventricle of the heart, but its perfection chiefly from the lungs: it is a fine spirit, produced by the power of a gentle heat, of a bright color, of an igneous quality; and is, as it were, a lucid vapor from the purest blood, having the substance of water, air, and fire. It is generated by the air which we inspire, mixt in the lungs with the elaborated subtil blood, which the right ventricle communicates to the left.

‘Now this communication is not made through the *septum* of the heart, as ’tis commonly believed; but the subtil blood is driven by a wonderful contrivance, from the right ventricle of the heart, through a long duct, into the lungs, by which it is prepared, and made bright; then it passeth from the *vena arteriosa* into the *arteria venosa*; there it mixeth with inspired air, and is purged from its *fuligo* by expiration. Lastly, the whole mixture is brought into the left ventricle of the

heart by *diastole*, and is become fit matter to produce the vital spirit.'

'That the communication and the preparation, are made through the lungs, we learn, from the various conjunction and communication of the *vena arteriosa* with the *arteria venosa* in the lungs; this is confirmed by the considerable bigness of the *vena arteriosa*, which had never been so large, nor would send forth from the heart into the lungs, such a quantity of the pure blood, was it only for the nourishment of the lungs; nor would the heart serve the lungs upon that account, since the lungs themselves in an *embryo*, till the time of its birth, do receive their nourishment from something else, because of the little membranes of the heart, according to *Galenus*.'

'A little after he adds, that vital spirit therefore is transfused from the left ventricle of the heart into the arteries of the whole body, in such a manner that the most subtil portion of it flies upward, where it is further refined, especially in the *plexus retiformis*, under the basis of the *cerebrum*, where the vital spirit begins to be changed into the animal one, drawing nearer to the true nature of a rational soul.'

'This is that famous passage (adds the author of the history) which is so much taken

notice of, on account of the circulation of the blood. There are indeed several things here that are remarkable, viz. that the blood, in a great stream, passes through a very large and wide duct, from the right ventricle of the heart, into the lungs; that there the blood is purified; and from thence it is driven, by the pulmonary vein, into the left ventricle of the heart; that there is an immediate communication between the arteries and the veins, by *anastomosis*; that the most pure part of the blood, refined in the lungs, enters the arteries, and from the arteries into the veins, &c. This shows that Servetus was a great observer of nature, and no doubt would have improved those notions and carried them much further, had he not been prevented by an untimely death.'

If the description which Doctor Servetus gave of the circulation of the blood was not so complete as that of Dr. Harvey, it is to be remembered that the former lived a century before the latter, and appears to have been the first who made the discovery, and that his persecutors prevented his further investigation of the subject. It is not improbable but the destruction of his book which contained this discovery, excepting a very few copies, might

prevent its being known to the learned world until so long after.

As to Dr. Wotton's saying 'Well had it been for the church of Christ, if he had confined himself to his own profession;' wherein does this appear? What did Servetus do to injure any church, or disturb the peace of any man living? Could not he point out what he thought the errors of his fellow christians, and endeavor to enlighten mankind, without injuring them? It is true too many men are offended when their mistakes are pointed out; but ought this to be the case? He thought for himself, and he made his opinions public; but what harm could arise to the church from his doing this? How absurd and unjust it is for writers, with a single dash of the pen, without giving themselves the trouble to examine the merits of a cause, obliquely to condemn, as injurious characters, men whose learning and penetration they are compelled to acknowledge! 'The world might then (adds Dr. Wotton) have had just cause to bless his memory.' As if his supposed heterodox opinions rendered even his professional labors useless! The Dr. could not deny that he possessed great sagacity, and that the glory of discovering that 'the whole mass of blood passes through the lungs, by the

pulmonary artery and vein,' belongs to him. With the Doctor's leave, the world has just cause to bless the memory of Servetus, not only for this important discovery; but also for the noble stand he made for christian liberty and the rights of conscience, against bigots and persecutors; for his steady exertions to discover and promote truth; and for the sacrifice he made of his reputation and his life, in attempting to extirpate deep-rooted errors and prejudices.

#### SECTION IV.

##### *His Edition of Ptolemy's Geography.*

The Doctor is said to have made some very important corrections, with the assistance of ancient manuscripts, in Pirckheymer's translation of Ptolemy; but not to have made the least alteration in the description of Judea, which he gave word for word as it stood before. His first edition of Ptolemy's geography was printed at Lyons, in 1535, in one Volume Folio; that of Pirckheymer had been published at Strasburgh ten years before.

This book is divided into three parts. The first part contains one hundred and forty-nine

pages. The first four pages contain an advertisement to the reader by Servetus; the epistle dedicatory of Pirckheymer to the former edition; and a table of the chapters in the first part. Then follows the text of Ptolemy. The second part which is not paged, contains Ptolemy's index of lands, seas, rivers, countries, distances, and so on. The third consists of maps, with historical explanations.

The following passage occurred in the description of Judea. 'The books of the bible, and Josephus, who has followed them, call this land Canaan, and say, that it abounds in various riches, fertile in fruits, well watered, full of balm, and situated in the middle of the world, which makes it neither incommoded by too great cold, nor burnt up with heats: on account of a climate so happy, the Israelites, formerly called the Hebrews, believed that this was the country flowing with milk and honey, which God had formerly promised to their fathers, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. For this reason forty years after their departure from Egypt, they took possession of it under the conduct of their valiant general, Joshua. Know, however, friendly reader, that this is either a mistake, or pure ostentation, that they have ascribed so much goodness to this country; for the experi-

ence of many merchants and travellers have discovered it to be uncultivated, barren, and destitute of every thing agreeable. Therefore it may be called the promised land, but not in the modern vulgar sense of the word, which implies that it deserves the highest praise.'

Supposing this passage to have been written by Servetus, and that it be construed in the most unfavorable light: it cannot amount to a proof of either atheism, or blasphemy against God: it can only prove that he was misled in his ideas of what the land of Judea was formerly, by the description which travellers have given of its present state. But it appears that he did not write it. It may be said he made it his own by republishing it. But he might republish it without due consideration: and he did actually suppress it in the next edition. If he really thought that all the fine things which had been said of that country could not be reconciled with evident facts, surely this was not a capital crime. He might be mistaken on such a subject, without being chargeable with blasphemy, and deserving to be burnt alive. It is not clear that he meant any reflection upon Moses, or to deny the scripture account of Canaan; but rather the modern interpretation of



it; for he said, 'It may be called the promised land, but not in the modern vulgar sense of the word, which implies that it deserves the highest praise.' Servetus was neither an atheist, nor a deist; it appears by his writings, that he was firmly persuaded of the truth of the Old Testament; therefore it is absurd to suppose he intended to make any reflection to the prejudice of Moses. It seems, however, that upon further thought, he judged the passage improper, and accordingly suppressed it.

It may justly be questioned whether the descriptions which the writers of the Old Testament give of the land of Canaan ought to be taken in the rigid literal sense, in which they have been generally construed by christians. It is well known that the hebrew writers very commonly used a highly figurative style in their description of things. Hence, in their writings, we read of cities walled up to heaven, of armies as numerous as the sand on the sea shore, and of a land flowing with milk and honey. Some allowance should be made for the hyperbolical language they used, in attending to the accounts which the jewish historians give of their country. Besides every country is to be judged of by comparison with some other. If the land of Canaan was not absolutely

deserving of the highest praise, it might in comparison of the adjacent countries. Though, at the time of its greatest prosperity, it could have been proved to be less fertile than some of the highly cultivated countries of modern Europe, it would by no means follow that it was not superior to the lands which surrounded it, and perhaps to any other part of the world, in those early ages; which is all the description given of it by Moses implies. To the Israelites, after having been so long in slavery in Egypt, after having wandered forty years in the desert, it would appear every thing their leader had represented it. A land which had springs of water and rivers, which produced corn, wine, oil, honey, and pasturage for their cattle, which was watered by rain from heaven, and already cultivated to their hand, would, according to their views, deserve the highest praise. Besides, though the land of Canaan, in the highly cultivated state in which the Jews found it, might, in this restricted sense, answer the description Moses gave of it, we are not hence to infer that it would continue the same when its cultivation was neglected. He by no means taught them that it would produce all good things without their labor and industry. The observance of

his laws was calculated to preserve such order among them, and to support such a system of policy and domestic œconomy, as would promote the fertility of the country ; whilst the neglect of them involved such circumstances as tended to produce sterility. Further, in the description given of their land, seems to be comprehended, the liberties and religious advantages they should enjoy there, under the reign of wholesome and equal laws. In this manner, it is conceived, the mosaic account of Canaan should be explained ; and not as intended to represent that country as absolutely superior, or even, merely as a country, equal, to every other country in the world. Consequently, there could be nothing blasphemous, in representing the ideas formed of the land of Judea as extravagant : the error seems to lie in construing what Moses said of it in too literal and absolute a sense.

#### SECTION V.

##### *A specimen of Servetus' Epistolary writing.*

It appears that Servetus wrote many letters ; the following, which has been preserved from destruction among the few fragments of his

works preserved by different writers, I transcribe. It was written to Abel Pepin, one of the ministers at Geneva, about six years before he was committed to prison in that city. It shows that even at that time he expected, sooner or later, to die for the cause he had espoused.

‘ Although my twelfth epistle to Calvin (says he) makes it very plainly appear, that the obligation of the Decalogue is vacated, yet I will add one place more, by which you may the better understand the alteration that is made by the coming of Christ; that the law of the Decalogue therefore was abrogated, you will be thoroughly convinced of, if you read one place in the xxxi. of *Jeremiah*, where the prophet teaches us, that the covenant that God entered into with the fathers of the *Jewish* nation, when they went out of Egypt, was done away. I will make a new covenant with the house of *Israel*, and the house of *Judah*, not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers, in the day that I took them by the hand, to bring them out of the land of Egypt, which, my covenant they brake. This was the covenant of the Decalogue; for it is said in 1 Kings 8 and 9, That there were in the ark the two tables of

stone which Moses put there at Horeb, when the Lord made a covenant with the children of Israel, when they came out of the land of Egypt, viz, the covenant of the Decalogue: hence it was called the ark of the covenant, the tables of the covenant, and the ten words of the covenant. Now this was the form of their entering into covenant; God promised that the Jews should be his people, upon condition that they performed these words or commands, and they engaged to receive God for their Lord, and become his people, upon this condition of keeping these commands. Lo! this is the covenant. And Jeremiah tells us, that this covenant was put an end to in the aforesaid chapter; and Ezekiel in the 16th chapter, and Paul in the 8th of the Hebrews. If God was to receive us now into his favor, upon that condition, we should perish under the same yoke they did, and should come under the curse. That law therefore is abrogated. God does not now take us to be his own people under that covenant, but by the faith of Jesus Christ, his beloved Son alone. Hence you may perceive how your gospel is confounded with the law; your gospel is without the one God, without the true faith, without good works. For the one God, you have a three-headed *Cerberus*;

for the true faith, you have a fatal dream; and as for good works, you say they are empty pictures; the faith of Christ, with you, is mere paint, without efficacy. Mankind in your account, are no more than stupid blocks; and God, in your system, is no other than a monster of arbitrary fate. Regeneration by water, which is from heaven, you are so far from acknowledging, that you look upon it only as a fable. You shut men out of the kingdom of heaven, by excluding us from it, as an imaginary happiness. Woe to you! woe! woe! I would fain have you so well apprized of your real interest and duty, by this my third letter, that you may get a better way of thinking; especially since you are not likely to have any such advice from me hereafter. It is perhaps far from agreeable to you that I should concern myself with *Michael's* war in the Apocalypse, or that I should desire you to look into it: but do so much as consider that passage narrowly, and you will soon perceive who the men were to be, who would engage in that quarrel, viz. such as were resolved to expose their lives unto the death, for the blood and the testimony of Jesus Christ. Nothing is more certain than that angels are spoken of in the scriptures. Can any

thing be more plain from thence, than that the church of Christ has been vanquished for many years since? Does not the vision there relate to futurity, as John himself asserts? Who is that accuser there, who is said to accuse us before, because of the transgression of the laws and precepts? He saith that the accusation was to be made before the battle, and the time is at hand, as he says, Who are they who shall get the victory of the beast, not receiving his character, or mark upon them? That I must die for the cause I have espoused, I certainly know; but I am not at all cast down upon that account, since by that I shall be a disciple, made like his master. This indeed I am really concerned for, that by your means I cannot have an opportunity of correcting several places in my writings which are in Calvin's hands. Adieu; and don't expect to receive any more letters from me. I will stand upon my guard; I will wait and see what the LORD will say unto me; for he will come, he will certainly come, and will not tarry.'

## CHAPTER VI.

### A SUMMARY VIEW OF THE OPINIONS OF SERVETUS.

*Sect. 1. On the trinity, and the person of Christ.*

*Sect. 2. On Baptism, original Sin, the distinction between the Law and Gospel, and Justification.*

*Sect. 3. On the sense of Prophecy,*

*Sect. 4. On christian Liberty.*

THE opinions of Servetus were no doubt greatly misrepresented by his enemies. It is not easy to ascertain what were his precise views on some points; his leading doctrines however are well known. Of these the following is an outline. Our enquiry is not so much whether his opinions were true or false, as it is whether there was any thing in them, that could justify Calvin and his associates in condemning a man of piety and virtue to a most painful and ignominious death. In some things we think he was mistaken, and who can say he is free from mistakes; but we judge his most leading doctrines



were true, nor do we wonder that on some points his thoughts were confused and unintelligible, or that he retained some errors, seeing he had so lately escaped out of the darkness of popery, and the trammels of superstition; we rather wonder that he went so far beyond his contemporaries in the knowledge of divine truth.

### SECTION I.

#### *On the trinity, and the person of Christ.*

These points seem to have engaged the attention of Servetus and to have employed his pen more than any other. He was a determined antitrinitarian. Throughout all his writings he treated the notion of three persons in one divine Essence as a chimera, a mere imagination: and asserted the unity, and exclusive supremacy, of the one God, the Father: That the term God 'properly belongs to him, who is over all, who is the prince of all, the King of kings, and Lord of lords, of whom all are, and on whom they depend, who alone is the Father and Creator of all things:' and that it is only in a restricted sense it can agree to any other being.

Concerning Christ the following are said to be his three positions. '1. This is JESUS CHRIST;

that is *Jesus of Nazareth*, a true man, conceived of the Holy Ghost, born of the Virgin, is the Christ of God, or the Messiah promised to the fathers. 2. This is the SON of GOD, that is, this man substantially from God, inasmuch as from the true substance of God; namely, begotten of the Holy Ghost, he is the true and natural, and properly the SON of God, whereas we are only adopted; so that the body of Christ has a real participation of the substance of God. 3. He is God, not that one and most high, who alone is God the Father; yet substantially, because in him is the Godhead bodily; the God of us all, exalted by God his Father.' In another place he says 'That the manner of the Deity, which the Son possesseth, agrees with him as a man; for the Son is a man made God, or filled with the divinity, therefore the superiority of the Father is not taken away by the Son; for although the Son is constituted by the Father, our Lord, God, and Head; yet the Father is still the Lord, God, and Head of the Son.' Hence it is evident, he believed Christ to be purely a man, and that all the distinction between him and other men arose either from the miraculous nature of his conception, or from the fulness which the Father had commu-

nicated to, and the power and glory he had conferred on him.

As the Doctor firmly believed the miraculous conception, and philosophized upon it, this seems to have led him into some unintelligible notions, as, that the Deity supplied the place of the semen, that the man Jesus was substantially from God, that the body of Christ has a real participation of the substance of God, that he was the natural Son of God: indeed all his false conceptions, and confused notions, of the generation and person of Christ, seem to have arisen from this source.

That, when he said, in his first work on the trinity, *Christ was præformed in the divine mind; he was a certain mode of being himself there, which mode God disposed of in himself, that he might make himself known to us; i. e. by describing the effigies of Jesus Christ in himself*, he did not mean to assert the pre-existence, much less the proper deity of Christ, is clear from the following passage, which Calvin collected from his writings, and to the truth of which he assented. ‘As all things are now in God, so they were in the same order in him before the creation, and Christ first before all things in him. Likewise that God eternally discerning, by his own eternal reason, his Son to be corporeal, and

visible to himself, exhibits himself visible, by the substance of the like species, through the world.' This confirms the exposition I attempted of the above passage in another part of this work.

Like many other unitarians after his time, he called Christ God, a man made God, &c. The sense in which he used the term God, when he applied it to Christ, he fully explained, by saying, that taken in a limited sense it may agree to creatures: as Moses is called the God of Pharaoh, &c. And again, he says, 'After this manner the scripture calls Gods, whomsoever the supreme and eternal God hath adorned and exalted above others, by any particular favor, virtue, or privilege. Hence the *Psalmist*, Ps. 82: 6. *I have said ye are Gods*, &c. and *Exod.* 22: 28. These are not Gods by nature, but by the gift and grace of God.' It is evident, when he applied the term God to Christ, nothing was further from his thoughts than the idea of his being the supreme and self-existent God: he only meant that he is a God to us, as Moses was a God to Pharaoh, and Cyrus a God to Israel. However just the idea he meant to convey, it seems improper to call Christ God, as we have no unequivocal proof that he is so called in the New Testament, and because men, in

the present day, naturally associate with the word God an idea of a supreme and self-existent being.

Servetus thought it right to pray to Jesus Christ. This was very inconsistent with his views of the unity and supremacy of the one God and Father, and of the proper humanity of the Son of God. He could not, with the sentiments he held, pray to Christ, and offer him divine adoration, without the idea of praying and offering divine adoration to a man presenting itself to his mind; the same must be said of Socinus, and some others; but we must allow for this inconsistency, by considering how difficult it is for even wise and good men to disentangle themselves from long established customs, and to stand entirely clear of the influence of superstition. The practice of praying to Christ has not the least countenance from the new Testament if we except the case of Stephen, which some christians construe to favor it, which case cannot apply to any ordinary circumstances, as he had a vision of the Lord Jesus at the time. It is a practice evidently contrary to both the precepts and example of the great Master of christians, and of his holy apostles, and must be ranked among the corruptions of christianity.

On the whole it is manifest, however crudely Servetus might sometimes express himself, he was strictly a unitarian.

## SECTION II.

*On Baptism, original Sin, the distinction between the Law and Gospel, and Justification.*

Servetus was an antipedobaptist. He contended that no one ought to be baptized until he could make a personal profession of faith in Christ, and that the baptism of little infants was a gross corruption of christianity. This John Calvin called horrid blasphemy ; but the opinion of Servetus derives abundant support from the New Testament.

One of the grounds of infant baptism is the notion of original sin, or that all mankind are born into the world morally depraved, and consequently under the wrath of God, that baptism is necessary to bring them into a state of grace. In the service of the church of England we are told that in baptism the infant is made *a member of Christ, a child of God, and an inheritor of the kingdom of heaven.* It is probable the absurd notion of original sin, first gave rise to the unscriptural practice of infant baptism. Original

sin, Servetus zealously opposed, and it seems said, *a mortal sin cannot be committed before the age of twenty*. Probably he thought the loving and merciful father of mankind was not so inexorable as to hurl his rational offspring to destruction for the effects of youthful imbecility and inexperience. In denying original sin he was a consistent antipedobaptist. Those baptists who admit that notion act inconsistently; they reject pedobaptism, while they maintain the ground on which it seems to have been introduced.

Another ground on which pedobaptism is supported is the Abramic covenant, and the substitution of baptism in the place of circumcision. In other words, it derives its support from a confusion of ideas respecting the law and the gospel, the confounding of the one with the other. Servetus clearly distinguished the gospel from the law, as an entire distinct system, and contended that the law was totally abrogated. Here again he acted consistently as a baptist: while those who contend that we are all born under the law, and remain under it until we personally believe in Christ, and at the same time renounce pedobaptism, leave their opponents a strong ground of argument against them; for if we are born under the law we ought either

to be circumcised, or subjected to some other rite substituted in the place of circumcision. That many christians still suppose that we are born under the law is manifest; for they contend that it is necessary to preach the law to convince men of sin, and thunder out the curses of the law against us Gentiles.

Servetus' ideas of justification were certainly different from those of the Lutherans; for he said they did not understand the subject, and Melancthon said that *his* notion of justification was very extravagant. It is probable he supposed justification to comprehend not only the free forgiveness of sins, but also the being made truly righteous characters, such as God would approve; for he contended that the righteousness of the kingdom of Christ must excel that of the law; consequently he could have no idea of men being made righteous by the righteousness of another being transferred to them. It is likely, as a consistent baptist, he considered baptism as exhibiting the true character of the christian religion, as a religion of universal purity, and that in baptism the believer professed to be risen with Christ to newness of life: this he would naturally conceive to be inconsistent with the Lutheran notion of justification, which



supposed the sinner to become righteous before God, merely by the imputation of the righteousness of another, before he had any righteousness of his own. On the whole it appears that the Doctor was altogether a consistent baptist.

### SECTION III.

#### *On the sense of Prophecy.*

Whatever may be said of Servetus' mode of explaining prophecy, it is pretty evident he struck out a new, and more rational, method of judging of its sense, than has hitherto been generally adopted. He seems to have found the true key to the real sense of the prophecies, by considering them as having their foundation in the jewish history, and that they ought to be generally explained as having a reference to the affairs of that nation: and to other nations and events as they had a bearing on them. Whether he, in every instance, made a proper use of this key is quite another matter.

His notion of the double sense of prophecy will be thought by many, and for very good reasons, indefensible; as it renders the sacred writings obscure, and indefinite. Yet it is easy to make an allowance for this mistake. He erred

with the generality of expositors. The idea of a mystical sense was so common that it was not easy to detect its fallacy. He might not have observed that many passages are accommodated to Christ, in the New Testament, which were not written originally as prophecies of him. He might be led the more easily into the supposition of a double sense, to avoid the common error of regarding most of the prophecies as relating immediately and directly to Christ. An undue deference to the popular opinion, which supposed Christ was to be found every where in the Old Testament, might lead him to seek a mystical sense.

On the whole his opinion respecting the method to be adopted, in order to an understanding of the prophecies, is worthy the most serious consideration.

#### SECTION IV.

##### *On christian Liberty.*

Servetus was a friend to christian liberty. He opposed that odious principle of persecution, that men ought to be put to death for their erroneous opinions, and contended that they

ought not to be massacred because they are in error. In his petition to the Magistrates of Geneva he shows 'That the persecution of a man for the doctrine of scripture, or for any question arising from it, is a new invention, unknown to the apostles and their disciples, and to the ancient church.' Thus it appears it was his opinion that men should be left to enquire concerning the doctrines of scripture, or any questions arising from those doctrines, freely, without incurring any pains or penalties.

I have barely selected the leading opinions of the Doctor, those for which he suffered martyrdom. It is not necessary to descend to his views upon more subordinate points, and it would be extremely difficult to ascertain what they were. In the opinions I have noticed what is there worthy of death or even of bonds? In the present more liberal age, and this more tolerant country, opinions deemed equally heretical are avowed and defended with impunity; and what injury does any person sustain by the exercise of this liberty? Whether the opinions of Servetus were true or false, and men of learning and piety will differ on that point, he had an unquestionable right to propagate them. Human laws cannot change the nature of

justice, though they may subvert justice; they cannot disprove, though they may destroy, the rights of christians. By such proscribing and unjust laws was Servetus condemned.

## CHAPTER VII.

### SERVETUS VINDICATED.

*Sect. 1. On the ground of natural right. Sect. 2. On the ground of reason and scripture, which authorize the liberty he used, and approve his leading doctrines. Sect. 3. On the ground of antiquity. Sect. 4. By the example of Calvin and his associates. Sect. 5. By the effects produced by his writings and sufferings. Sect. 6. By the countenance his leading doctrines have received, from some of the greatest men, since that time. Sect. 7. The failings of Servetus did not arise from a vicious principle.*

THOUGH it is presumed the circumstances placed before the reader, in the preceding chapters, will, upon an impartial examination, vindicate the character of Servetus, it is thought proper to enter into a more direct, though concise, defence of his conduct, in the avowal and propagation of his most leading doctrines. His

opinions were at that time thought singular and dangerous; in the same light they are still viewed by many christians; but the question is, has not every man a right to form his own opinions, and, if he think proper, to publish them to the world? Ought not every honest man to be protected in the full enjoyment, and free exercise of this right? Is it not every man's duty to judge for himself, and can he avow any other opinions than those he believes, without being a hypocrite? The vindication of Servetus involves a defence of the dearest rights of christians, the right of private judgment, and of acting according to the dictates of their own conscience. Either he must be vindicated or the act of toleration, which allows liberty of conscience, must be condemned, and all who wish to think and act for themselves in religious matters, left to the merciless rage of bigots and persecutors.

## SECTION I.

*On the ground of natural right.*

Every man has an unquestionable right to judge for himself in all matters of religion and conscience. No one can have a right to dictate to another what he shall believe, and how he shall worship God. Every man has a natural claim to liberty of speech: this is a right common to all men: no one can give a reason why he should exercise this right that will not apply to all men. It is of no use saying men have a right to judge for themselves, if you will not allow them to express their judgment. Freedom of thought and action, independence of mind and conduct, stamp dignity on the human character, they ennoble man. Servetus claimed nothing more than his natural rights, as a creature endowed with reason and conscience. He chose to use the reason God had given him, to form his own opinions on religious subjects, to follow the dictates of his conscience. It was a noble choice, and infamy attaches to the men who punished him for making it. He attempted not to judge for others, to restrain them from the exercise of the same

liberty, to impose any yoke of bondage on them ; and what right had they to control his judgment, or exercise dominion over his conscience ? He did no more than every man has a right to do ; for every man has a right to declare his religious opinions, without reserve, in the face of the whole world, and to do all in his power to enlighten his fellow creatures. To renounce this right is to give up the prerogative of a rational creature, to part with so much of manhood, and become a degraded slave. Those who claim this prerogative themselves, and deny it to others, are daring invaders of the rights of human nature. On the ground of natural right Servetus stands justified in the assertion of his opinions, and his enemies condemned.

## SECTION II.

*On the ground of reason and scripture, which authorize the liberty he used, and approve his leading doctrines.*

It is agreeable to reason for a man to form his own opinions, and avow them openly. Reason will ever approve his following the dictates of his conscience. The sacred scriptures authorize



this liberty. It has the sanction of Jesus Christ, *And why of your ownelves judge ye not what is right ? All ye are brethren :* and of his apostles, *Prove all things, hold fast that which is good : Ye are called unto liberty.* While Servetus so manfully exerted himself to discover and promote truth, ever following the dictates of his understanding and his conscience, reason smiled with approbation, and scripture sanctioned his conduct by as plain declarations as ever issued from the lips of truth.

The Doctor's leading opinions were perfectly agreeable to reason and revelation. In asserting the unity of God, he had Moses and the prophets, Jesus and his apostles, to support his assertions. *Hear O Israel, the Lord thy God is one Lord. Thou shalt have no other Gods beside me. I am God and there is none else. There is one God, and there is none other but he. To us there is but one God, the Father. One God and Father of all. One God and one Lord Jesus Christ. One God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus.* Such are the plain declarations of revelation in support of the divine unity. Reason revolts at the idea of three distinct persons, in one individual essence or being. All nature leads to the contem-

plation of one first cause. It no where discovers a triune God, nor do the scriptures any where intimate such a triplicity of subsistences in the Deity.

Reason teaches that a Son never could exist as early as his Father, that a being who was truly man must be inferior to God Almighty. Jesus himself said, *Why callest thou me good ? there is none good but one, that is God. The Son can do nothing of himself. I can of my own self do nothing. My Father is greater than I.*—Consequently, when Servetus asserted the supremacy of the Father, and the inferiority of the Son, he had both reason, and the plain declarations of Jesus Christ on his side.

That Jesus Christ was purely a man it is reasonable to conclude, from all the circumstances of his outward appearance, from his being born, his growing from infancy to manhood, from his having the appetites and all the feelings of a man, from his sufferings, death and resurrection ; for all these things are predicated of the very Christ. It is directly contrary to reason to suppose the same individual person can be two distinct beings, of very different orders, at one time : that the same individual could be a suffering man and the God of the whole universe. Both the friends and enemies of Jesus

Christ understood him to be a man, and spoke of him as such. He very frequently called himself the Son of man. He had both a mother and brethren; but surely God Almighty could have neither. Throughout the New Testament he is spoken of as a man. The salvation of sinners, the whole work of mediation, the raising the dead, and the executing of judgment, are all ascribed to him as man. It follows that Servetus was supported both by reason and scripture when he asserted the pure humanity of Christ. On the strictest scrutiny, it will be found, that the apostles never described their Master otherwise than as a man, anointed, exalted, and glorified.

The doctrine of original sin is directly contrary to reason; as it supposes men to be sinners before they are capable of knowing what sin is, that they are transgressors before they are capable of understanding any law, that their nature, which is the work of God, is sinful, and that they are under the wrath of God before they have done any thing amiss. Jesus Christ, during the whole of his ministry, never, that we are told, made the least mention of the sin of Adam, nor ascribed any of the evils which exist in men to that cause. His apostles, in

their public teaching, preserved the same total silence upon the subject. Only one writer in the New Testament, the apostle Paul, refers to the sin of Adam, and he does it incidentally to illustrate other subjects, and is very far from representing it as having corrupted the whole human race. Servetus, therefore, in exploding the popular notion of original sin had both reason and scripture on his side.

When he asserted that baptism ought only to be administered on the ground of a personal profession of faith, the whole history of baptism, that can be collected from the New Testament, supported his assertion. Pedobaptism is not only without authority from the apostolic writings, it is evidently contrary to reason, as it is either performed as a mere ceremony, and is useless, or it supposes effects to be produced in a little babe, who can need no repentance, having done nothing amiss, and which is incapable of believing, which the scriptures always associate with repentance and faith, and therefore is absurd. It follows that the Doctor acted consistently with reason and scripture when he opposed pedobaptism.

Had his opinions been altogether erroneous, while he believed them to be true, both reason and scripture would have justified Servetus in the open avowal of them, and in using all the rational means in his power to promote what he thought truth. In doing this he would have acted the part of an honest man; but, upon a close examination, it will be found he had more truth on his side than his persecutors.

### SECTION III.

#### *On the ground of antiquity.*

It is not unusual to call reputed heterodox opinions novel; when, perhaps, on impartial examination, they will be found the most ancient. No doctrines ought to be thought novel that can be proved from the sacred scriptures. Servetus' views of the unity and supremacy of the one God the Father, and of the inferiority and subordination of his Son Jesus Christ, however novel they might appear to the men of his age, will, on the closest examination, be found to have been the views which the generality of christians entertained for several centuries after the christian æra. He could not be ignorant, as a man well versed in sacred and profane

things, that all the *Antinicens*, the *Nicens*, and also the *Constantinopolitan* fathers ; that is, indeed all christians had, for near four hundred years, maintained this unmoveable fundamental of the catholic truth, *I believe in one God the Father Almighty, Creator of heaven and earth, and in his only Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.* At that time the *Latin* doctors taught, that the Father was the author of the Son ; and the *Greeks*, that he was the cause of the Son ; and that all ecclesiastical prayers were addressed to one God, through Christ the mediator. Thus Servetus was justified in his leading doctrines, by what had been the general belief of christians during the early ages of the church. The reader will be fully convinced of this, if he will give himself the trouble to examine, Dr. Priestley's work entitled ' Early opinions concerning Christ.' In which the worthy author has shown that unitarianism long prevailed, before trinitarianism was able to supplant it, and establish itself in the world.



## SECTION IV.

*By the example of Calvin and his associates.*

The successful reformers had set the example of rejecting established customs and opinions; of resisting ecclesiastical authority, and spurning religious tyranny; of judging for themselves, and propagating their own opinions. Luther began the work, Calvin and his associates had followed in the same course: and why might not Servetus do the same things as they had done, though his opinions differed from theirs? He only followed the example which Luther, Calvin and all the reformers had set him. What could there be criminal in this? Had he not as much right as they to judge for himself? Had he not as much right to reject the authority of Calvin and all the reformers over his conscience, as they had to reject the authority of the pope and the church of Rome over their consciences; and to reject their dogmas, as they had to reject the dogmas of the catholic church? Had he not as much authority to publish what he thought truth, in opposition to them, and to expose their errors, as they had to publish what they thought truth in opposition to the pope and

his party, and to expose the errors of the romanists? Servetus is justified by the example of Calvin and his party; their admirers must either justify him or condemn them. An apostle hath said, *Happy is he that is not condemned in the thing that he alloweth.* This happiness belongs not to bigots who allow themselves to do, and glory in doing, what they will not suffer others to do with impunity. If the example of Calvin was good, Servetus could not be to blame for following it; if his imitation of it was criminal it must be because the example was a bad one.

#### SECTION V.

*By the effects produced by his writings and sufferings.*

Many persons judge of the goodness of a cause by its success, this is a false rule of judging; but even upon this principle Servetus may be vindicated. Though he fell a sacrifice to the cause he espoused, it has since been attended with considerable success, and will no doubt ultimately triumph. His books, we are told, were circulated in Italy soon after their



publication, and received with approbation by many in that country. It has been the opinion of some learned men, and the thing is highly probable, that *Lælius Socinus*, the uncle of *Faustus*, and several other Italians, derived their antitrinitarian opinions from Servetus' book, entitled *De Trinitatis Erroribus*. *Lælius Socinus* was but a boy when Servetus published that book, and we know of no other antitrinitarian publications, that were likely to come in his way but those of the Doctor. As Servetus was the first who wrote in defence of unitarianism, and the first martyr to the cause, after the æra of the reformation, he may with great propriety be called the reviver of the unitarian doctrine. Mr. Robinson says, 'From him proceeded partly, if not wholly, the unitarian baptist churches in most parts of Europe.' This will appear the more likely when it is considered how nearly the religious opinions of the Dutch general baptists, and indeed those of the general baptists every where, who lived near his time, coincided with his. He bore a faithful testimony against trinitarianism and pedobaptism, and sealed it with his blood; nor has his testimony been useless to mankind. Unitarians of every description, baptist, pedobaptist, and antibaptist, may consider him as a martyr

to the most fundamental doctrine in their religious system, the doctrine of the divine unity.

### SECTION VI.

*By the countenance his leading doctrines have received, from some of the greatest men, since that time.*

In the age in which he suffered, the doctrines of Servetus were countenanced by many persons of eminence for learning and piety. In every age they have found able advocates. Men of the most distinguished parts, of the deepest study and research, of the highest attainments in literature, science, and philosophy, have adopted the doctrine for which he suffered; only they have stated it more clearly, and pursued it further than he did. To enumerate all the eminent persons who have espoused unitarianism, since the martyrdom of Servetus, would be to give a list of characters the most distinguished, for rational piety, urbanity of manners, unaffected virtue, and unwearied literary and scientific exertions, that any party of christians can boast. The cause in which his life was sacrificed, being espoused by such men

is an ample vindication of his conduct in maintaining and dying in its defence. Though its progress be retarded by prejudice and bigotry, its advocates assailed, from every quarter, by the partizans of mystery, and loaded with calumny and misrepresentation, unitarianism keeps making progress, and, as rationality and candor increase, it cannot fail to gain ground. As unitarianism gains ground the fair fame of Servetus will rise to view, from amid the foul aspersions of his enemies.

#### SECTION VII.

*The failings of Servetus did not arise from a vicious principle.*

Servetus had his failings; for he was but a man, and what man is free from imperfection? but his enemies could not charge him with any vice.

It appears that his temper was warm; but, we do not find that he ever discovered a malignant disposition, or carried resentment to an injurious length. There was every thing in the conduct of his opponents to irritate his spirit, and he no doubt, sometimes, expressed himself unguardedly, and with undue warmth: yet he did

not show himself implacable or unbending; so far from it, he used these words, in his reply to the propositions which Calvin drew up against him, 'I wrote so, I confess, when you shall convince me of the contrary, I will not only receive it, but I will kiss the ground you go on.' This is not the language of either implacable resentment, or of unbending obstinacy.

The language he sometimes used to Calvin is not to be justified: yet some allowance ought to be made for it. It was common for disputants, in those days, to apply such epithets to each other, as could not be excused in the present more polite and liberal age; but it is to be remembered men were then less polished in their manners, and less courteous in their treatment of each other. Besides, the reformers and romanists, in their controversies with each other, had rendered customary the use of abusive language in religious disputation. Servetus' error consisted in his, in some degree, falling into what was then a general practice. Further, it is to be remembered, Calvin set him the example, by abusing him first, and that all along he exceeded Servetus in the use of opprobrious terms, calling him, 'A Spanish dog, &c.' and that he added the most cruel treatment to the foulest epithets. After all,

we find Servetus, a few hours before his death, sent for Calvin, and asked his pardon for any thing he had said improper in his contention with him. This showed a spirit of forgiveness, and goodwill, towards his greatest enemy. Calvin did not meet this overture of the dying man as he ought to have done, instead of consoling, he endeavored to tease him into an acquiescence with his own opinions? and when he found he could not do that he left him, as an irreclaimable heretic. Unfeeling man!

It seems, on his examination at Vienne in Dauphine, Servetus made use of some evasion and prevarication, with a view to shun the cruel death to which he was exposed. Though his conduct in this instance cannot be defended, some excuse is to be made for him. He was arrested unexpectedly there; he was, in some degree, taken by surprise; as he had many friends at Vienne, they might advise him to such a conduct. He was but a man, his fears got the better of him, and he was betrayed into that duplicity of conduct which in his heart he disapproved. He is not the only great and good man that ever was overcome by the fear of suffering; it has been the case with many. Peter denied his Master with oaths and cursing, Cranmer recanted in order to

save his life: Peter repented of his conduct; Cranmer repented and became a faithful martyr; so did Servetus, he could not be brought to recant at Geneva, in order to save his life. Why then should what occurred at Vienne be remembered against him, any more than Cranmer's recantation is remembered against him. Servetus was guilty of an improper compliance, in sometimes attending the service of the catholic church at Vienne; but it was impossible to avoid doing this, while he resided there, without risking his safety, and his life. It may be said he might have removed into a protestant country. He had tried that experiment and found there was no rest nor safety for him there. However wrong his seeming compliance, for a time, with what he disapproved might be, he repented of it, and confessed that he had sinned in suffering his fears to influence him so to act. Instead of being severe on those good men, who have fallen into dissimulation to preserve their lives, we should be severe on those abominable proscribing laws which have a tendency to make men hypocrites: remembering we know not how we should act were we exposed to their fury.—

Whatever weakness Servetus might have before displayed, he endured the flames at Geneva, with that magnanimity which became a faithful martyr for truth.

## CHAPTER VIII.

To the preceding outline of the life, persecution, writings and opinions of Servetus, this chapter is added in the form of an oration, to bring his character and sufferings, at one view, the more fully before the reader. After having detailed the principal facts, and appealed to the understanding, it is presumed it cannot be improper to offer a more direct address to the feelings, and to adopt a style somewhat declamatory.

It may be thought a novel circumstance, that an address, in some degree resembling what is commonly delivered a few days after the decease of a distinguished character, should be penned for Servetus two centuries and a half after his demise: but the novelty of the thing is no proof of its impropriety. Not knowing that any such mark of respect has hitherto been paid him, and thinking it a tribute due to his memory, I have ventured to include it in this



work, apprehending that it fully comports with its leading design.

If we would wish to be had in everlasting remembrance, and that our memory should be blessed by the righteous and the good, let us learn to disregard the evanescent praise which the voice of ignorance and flattery can bestow, which is undeserving the notice of a wise man; and aspire after that lasting reputation which can only be attained by solid worth and sterling excellence of character. Let us prefer the praise of God to that of men, and be anxious for the honor which cometh from him only. This can be attained only by a life of integrity, virtue, and goodness. Secure of the divine approbation, we need not fear the frowns and reproaches of mortals; for however much they may disparage us now, if we please God, a time will come when they shall be compelled to applaud our conduct.

## AN ORATION ON SERVETUS.

*The memory of the just is blessed.*

PROV. 10: 7.

To be just is to act justly, to do that which is right, habitually and from pure motives.— The just man is not without some blemishes; there are some defects in the best of characters; but he will not intentionally do wrong: his heart is upright, his professions sincere, and his conduct regulated by principles of virtue and goodness.

To be a just man is no mean praise. When so many leave the path of rectitude, sacrifice virtue to interest, ambition, or some sensual passion, the man who maintains his integrity, and pursues an undeviating course of virtue, deserves to be venerated, and when dead his memory should be blessed. With bigots virtue and goodness are but little thought of, if not associated with their favorite dogmas; with them faith is every thing, charity and good works are lightly esteemed. With that God, who is no respecter

of persons, who will render to every man according to his deeds, the just man is highly esteemed. *The Lord loveth the righteous.* In that great day when every one shall be rewarded according to his works, the just man shall be admitted into the heavenly kingdom; while the pharisee, with all his grimace, and sanctimonious appearances, and the bigot, with all his boasted orthodoxy, who has not done the will of God, shall be shut out: and the persecutor, who has beaten his fellow servants, shall have his portion with the hypocrites. When the Lord shall make up his jewels, the virtuous and good man, who, like the diamond on the dung-hill, has been despised in this world, shall be found among the treasures of the Most High.

The memory of the just may for a time be traduced, by the malignant tongue of calumny, and loaded with execration by the slaves of superstition: but it shall outlive the voice of slander, and be remembered with respect when superstition and its minions are forgotten, or are remembered only to be abhorred. It may be blackened for a time, by the misconstructions of bigots, and the vile tales of persecutors; but it shall come forth as the sun from an eclipse, and *shine as the brightness of the firmament.* The due meed of respect, which their own age

denied them, after ages shall bestow upon the memory of the just. Though no sculptured marble, nor poetic lays, proclaim their worth, their virtuous actions, and patient sufferings, shall not be forgotten, but prove a lasting monument to their name. *The just shall be had in everlasting remembrance.* When the busts of heroes are broken and destroyed, when the work of the sculptor, intended to perpetuate their fame, shall have mouldered away, the memory of the good man shall continue, and receive the grateful commendation of the latest generations. The memory of the just shall survive 'the wreck of matter and the crash of worlds.' It shall be blessed in the morn of the resurrection, and at the general audit of the world. Jesus will say to the righteous, *Come ye blessed of my Father inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.* Then shall the wicked be constrained to say of the just man; *We fools counted his life madness, and his end to be without honor, how is he counted among the children of God, and his portion is among the saints?* Those who have suffered reproach, persecution, imprisonment, and made their exit in the flames, for the sake of a good conscience, will then be rewarded with honor, immortality, and eternal life: the crown of martyrdom will

them be exchanged for an unfading crown of glory. The King of martyrs will vindicate the memory of all who have been made like him in suffering.

*The memory of the just is blessed.* No widow's tears, nor orphan's cries, reproach it. No ruined cities, nor desolated plains, no fields laid waste, nor families dismembered, nor countries enslaved, proclaim the fearful recollection of the just, and excite a sensation of terror, or indignation, at the mention of their name. The curses of defrauded creditors, or of oppressed dependants, or of injured neighbours, light not on their memory. No violated rights of humanity, nor of conscience, no assassinated characters, no lives wasted in dungeon's gloom no cries and tears of the persecuted, stand an odious monument, to associate infamy with the recollection that such men lived. The ear that heareth of them, the imagination that recalls their image, blesseth them. They are remembered to be revered, their names are repeated with many pleasing recollections, and gratitude prevents their survivors from erasing them from the tablets of their memory. Their integrity, their condescension, their humanity, their compassion, their liberality, their patience in suffering, so oft as they recur to recollection, call

forth blessings on their memory. With pensive thoughts, and the sincerest regret for their loss, are mingled emotions of affection, attended with involuntary exclamations, at the remembrance of the just. Those pious dead, from whom such honorable mention is still withholden, whose worth and excellence are concealed from view, at least from general view, through the arts of envy, malice, or the narrowness of party spirit, shall not always remain forgotten; like undiscovered luminaries they shall one day be brought to view, and be the more admired from the circumstance of their having remained so long unnoticed.

The praise of having been a just man belongs to Servetus. Had he violated the rights of humanity, had his life been immoral, had he invaded the liberties of others, or attempted to deprive them of the rights of conscience, this praise might justly have been withholden from his memory. But he did none of these things. It has never been pretended that he was guilty of immorality, or inhumanity. Though, with true dignity of soul, he determined to think for himself, and claimed the exercise of the rights of conscience, he infringed not the liberty of others, he invaded not their rights, usurped no dominion over their consciences;

but left them to enjoy, without molestation, all the liberty he claimed for himself. Though persecuted himself, he attempted not to persecute others. He might have said, with one of old, *whose ox have I taken? or whose ass have I taken? or whom have I defrauded? whom have I oppressed? or at whose hands have I received any bribe to blind mine eyes therewith?* None of these things could be alledged against Servetus, nor any other act of injustice: he was a useful and honorable member of society: he was a just man. Yet his reputation has long been obscured, his memory has not been blessed as it ought. This has arisen from various causes. The age in which he lived was too rude and barbarous, too superstitious and bigoted, to do him justice; and the same malignant spirit which operated his destruction has too much infected the christian world ever since. Though a few learned and candid men, in every age since his martyrdom, have respected his memory, the majority of christians, by a kind of hereditary prejudice, which they have derived from their predecessors, and which they derived from his murderers, have been taught to think of him, and such men as he was, with abhorrence, without having any particular knowledge of his history or opinions: add to this that his history

has been too little known in this country, among all classes of christians.

Let us imagine ourselves standing on the place called Champel, a small eminence, about a musket shot from Geneva, where Servetus fell the victim of bigotry and party rage: there let us trace his history, contemplate his character, and weep over his ashes, scattered by the winds.

Born in the neighbourhood of the Pyrenees, he spent his first years amid the splendid and romantic scenery which nature there presents to the eye of the beholder; scenery calculated to awaken genius, and inspire lofty ideas. Descended from Arragonian ancestors, he inherited the free and independent spirit of his forefathers. Genius and learning ought ever to command respect; Servetus was possessed of no common genius; his attainments in literature and science, which he pursued with unwearied diligence, were not small: he rose superior to the men of his age, as the lofty cedar towers above the surrounding shrubs. The morning of his life was devoted to study, in which he so much delighted, and made such rapid progress, that before he had completed his fifteenth year, it is said, he understood Latin, Greek, and Hebrew.



So ardent was his pursuit of knowledge, that few branches of study escaped him at that early period: he is said, to have had, even then, a pretty extensive acquaintance with philosophy and mathematics, and to have dared to explore the intricacies of scholastic divinity.—The youthful mind is fond of pursuing new objects, and ever gratified with novelty: of course it must have been gratifying to our young student to be taken in the suit of a powerful monarch to a foreign country, and to be present at his coronation. He visited Italy in the retinue of the Emperor, Charles the fifth, and saw him crowned at Boulogna. A court is seldom a school of virtue; the pomp and ceremony which it presents, and the luxury and dissipation in which its retainers too generally indulge, must be calculated to dazzle the eyes, inflame the passions, and corrupt the mind of a youth; but it does not appear to have had any bad influence on Servetus: it is likely his thirst for knowledge counteracted the influence of temptation, and the allurements of sensual gratification.

We next find him at Thoulouse, entered as a student at the university there. It seems his father, who was a notary, wished him to study the civil law. However far he might gratify

that paternal wish, the sacred scriptures excited his more particular attention. The reformation had awakened religious enquiry, Servetus had read and seen much for his years, his mind was free and independent, he pursued the enquiries which the reformers had begun, he regarded reason and scripture as his faithful guides, he thought no subject too sacred to be scrutinized, and he outstripped his contemporaries.

Leaving Thoulouse he entered upon the work of a reformer. Let us consider the nature of the reformation he attempted, and the means he used to effect it.

It was not merely a change in the outward form and government of the church, a reformation of the gross corruptions and superstitious rites of popery, that Servetus aimed to produce. With a penetrative eye, he saw through the obnubilated system of antichristian mysteries, and surveyed the accumulated mass of errors and abominations which had so long scandalized the christian name, and enslaved the consciences of men. He perceived the whole to be founded on wrong notions of the Deity, of the nature of man, and the subversion of christian liberty. He could not content himself with the demolition of some parts of the old super-

structure, while the foundation and pillars which supported it were suffered to remain, especially as he saw erected on the same basis new fabrics, not much dissimilar, in some of their component parts, to the old. Despairing of the revival of primitive christianity until a change could be effected in the leading sentiments of christians, he attempted to convert them from their false notions of what were deemed the fundamentals of religion. He revived what catholics and protestants then thought old heresies, but what he, and many eminent men since his time, judged to be the genuine principles of christianity. Instead of a partial reform he was for an entire change of system. Such was the plan of reformation attempted by Servetus.

Whatever may be thought of his peculiar notions, it must be admitted, that none but a discriminating and comprehensive genius could, in those times, conceive, nor any but a great and daring mind enter upon, an enterprise of such vast magnitude, and attended with such almost insuperable difficulty and imminent danger: especially as he could hardly expect assistance from any quarter.

To secure protection to himself and support to his cause, he did not solicit the patronage of any prince, or worldly government. While

Luther, Calvin, and others, dwelt secure under the shadow of human laws and earthly governors, and basked in the smiles of princes and states, our reformer had all the laws and governors of the world, as well as the great leaders of all religious parties, against him. He contented himself with discovering truth and making it known, without attempting to impose his opinions upon others. He used no weapons but those of reason and scripture, and was content that others should receive or reject his doctrines, as they might think them true or false. Not sustaining the clerical character, nor ever having the opportunity of addressing public audiences, he could not disseminate his sentiments by teaching them publicly; but he used the means that were in his power to convince christians of their errors, and to promote what he thought truth. He held conferences with some of the reformers, he corresponded with others for a time, in particular with Calvin. He communicated his opinions to the world through the only channel that was open to him, the press: and was assiduous in circulating his books. He showed his courage by affixing his name to several of his publications, though he knew the perils which surrounded him. He at

last sealed his doctrine with his blood. What could he do more? If his plans of reform did not immediately succeed it was not for want of exertion on his part. He was above descending to force, or fraud, or any mean artifices, to obtain success. His conduct was open, the means he used liberal, manly, rational, and consistent with christianity. In a word, he attempted the greatest plan of reform, by the most magnanimous means, of any man in his day. If to attack error in all its fastnesses, and expose it even at the risk of life; if to propagate truth, when it is generally opposed, and die in its defence, constitutes a man a reformer, Servetus was one of the greatest, though not most successful, reformers in his day.

Driven from Germany, where he first appeared as a public character, by the ill treatment and persecuting temper of the protestants, he retired to Paris and qualified himself to act as a Doctor of Medicine: which profession he followed in several places in France, but longest at Vienne in Dauphine.

As a physician, as well as a theologian, Servetus distinguished himself, especially by the important discovery of the circulation of the blood. His penetrating genius outstripped his medical as well as theological contemporaries:

and other branches of science were promoted by his exertions.

For years his profession rendered him familiar with the bed of sickness, and the house of mourning; his exertions were employed for the relief of suffering humanity, and to arrest the progress of disease. In this honorable and useful employment he might have long continued, had he not been betrayed into the hands of the common enemies of protestants, by the protestants of Geneva. Called from the sick bed of a patient he was attending, and lured to the prison, under the pretence that certain sick and wounded prisoners needed his assistance there, he found himself robbed of his liberty, and subjected to a criminal prosecution, on account of his religious opinions. Caught in the toils of unfeeling persecutors, the horrors of an ignominious and cruel death menaced him. These he happily avoided, by escaping from the prison at Vienne, and eluding the pursuit of his adversaries. They burnt him however in effigy, with several bales of his books. This was the commencement of a scene of ferocious cruelty, began indeed by papists, through the instigation of Calvin, and his agents, renewed soon

after at Geneva, and terminated by a religious murder.

Driven from his abode, his friends and the duties of his profession, not for any crime, or dishonorable conduct, behold Servetus a fugitive, a proscribed man, against whom the demon of persecution is let loose, panting for his blood. Where shall he seek refuge, where find an asylum? Among the protestants? Alas! they have been his betrayers. Their tender mercies to him are not less cruel than those of the papists. Who can but lament to see a man of letters, of an honorable profession, of irreproachable character, whose only crime is his ardent love of truth, and his zeal to propagate it, hunted from society, subjected to every inconvenience, and menaced on every side with the most cruel tortures.

On his way to Naples Servetus arrives at Geneva. His presence in that city is known to Calvin, who applies to the magistrates, obtains his arrest, on the Lord's day too, and the poor fugitive is immured in a filthy dungeon.—Stripped of the property he had about him, deprived of common necessities, he lingers for weeks, in the prison of Geneva. He petitions for redress, but he petitions in vain. Bigots have no justice, no compassion for reputed he-

retics. An agent of Calvin's, an inmate of his house, is employed to enter a capital prosecution against Servetus, who is denied an attorney to assist him in his defence. Calvin draws up the process, and appears throughout the prime agent in the nefarious business: until at length, by a gross perversion of justice, and violation of every principle of christianity, Servetus is condemned to be burnt alive.

O Calvin! is this the influence of thy boasted doctrines of grace? Is this thy spirit of reformation? Is this thy kindness to thy brother in the day of his adversity? Is thy heart adamant or flint, that thou art unmoved by his sufferings, his complaints, his entreaties? Canst thou behold him, stripped of his property, immured in a noisome cell, without decent apparel, almost destroyed by vermin, and all this procured by thy means, and remain unmoved? What art thou doing while he is lingering out days and nights of misery, in a dungeon, into which thou hast hurled him, merely because he could not subscribe thy creed? Conducting a criminal prosecution against him, merely for his opinions, that thou mayest bring him to an ignominious death! O shame! O cruel man! will nothing but his blood satisfy thee? Must thou trample upon his ashes before thy wrath



can be appeased? O tell it not at Rome! publish it not in the court of Inquisition! lest the persecuting papists rejoice, lest the lords inquisitors triumph, and say 'the protestants are persecutors as well as we!'

Be comforted poor sufferer, the days of thy mourning shall soon be ended, the flames shall quickly terminate thy miseries; and thy name shall be ranked among those of the pious dead, of whom the world was not worthy. Remember, *They were stoned, they were sawn asunder, were tempted, were slain with the sword: they wandered about in sheep-skins, and goat-skins, being destitute, afflicted, tormented.* Like thee they suffered under the cruel hands of bigots, and died amidst the execrations of their persecutors. With them thou shalt be rewarded, at the resurrection of the just. The time is coming when thou shalt be comforted, and thy murderers, if they repent not, shall be tormented. Rejoice, thou art about to receive a crown of martyrdom.

See the persecuted physician brought forth from his prison, and fastened to a stake. See, they kindle a fire around him, to burn him to ashes. Where is this scene acted? Who are the instigators and perpetrators of this barbarous deed? Is it at Rome, or in Spain, under

the direction of popish priests, and agents of the bloody Inquisition? No, 'tis at Geneva! protestant Geneva! where Calvin's influence is paramount to the civil authority. Protestants are the actors in this tragedy. Protestants who so lately exclaimed against the church of Rome for her persecuting spirit and conduct. But they have drank of the wine of her fornication, and are imitating her bloody deeds. Who is he that attends the poor sufferer to his funeral pile? It is William Farel, whom Calvin calls his brother minister, the man who said Servetus ought to die a thousand times. Has he at length relented? Is he come to console him in his dying agonies: No, he manifests no sympathy, he discovers no compassion for the reputed heretic. He acts the part here which popish priests have often acted when they attended the burning of protestants. It is rather to tease the dying martyr he is come, to see if he will recant. He is come to behold the awful spectacle, which he can witness without any emotions of pity, without regretting that he had prompted his friend Calvin to proceed in the bloody work of persecution. And does he call himself a disciple, and even a minister, of the mild and merciful Jesus? But where is Calvin? Decency forbids his

being present at the last act of the cruel tragedy which he has instigated. Perhaps he is in his closet meditating on the conduct of a vindictive God whose wrath could not be appeased without the blood of an innocent person, or on the flames which he supposes the Almighty has kindled to torment those he is pleased to call heretics to all eternity.

How unmoved the people stand around! Have they lost all feeling for a suffering fellow creature? Is the milk of human kindness dried up in their breasts? Bigotry hath steeled their hearts. They believe the dogmas of John Calvin to be divine truth, and they know that Servetus has opposed those dogmas. They believe master Calvin to be an eminent servant of God, and he has pronounced Servetus a heretic, a blasphemer, and a dog: therefore they think he ought to be burnt to death.

See the flames ascend around the martyr, but he stands firm in the midst of them: he speaks not, nor shows any signs of repentance. He dies fully persuaded of the truth of his doctrine. He confirms the testimony he has borne, against the errors of papists and protestants, by the firmness with which he endures the devouring flames.

O bigotry! thou monster! what hast thou done? To consign to the most cruel death, in the prime of life, a person of a character so irreproachable, of talents so rare, of attainments so extraordinary, who might have been so useful to mankind, merely for his opinions. Infernal deed! O Calvin! what hast thou done? The voice of thy brother's blood crieth from the ground.

But see, the blessed martyr is fallen down in the midst of the fire, his life is departed, the conflict is over, his sufferings are for ever terminated. We weep, feel indignant at the conduct of Calvin, and retire.



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## NOTES.

Page 22, line 17, *below the christian standard.*

Persecutors are, in the scripture sense of the term, reprobates, *αδοκιμος*, below proof. Jesus Christ, by the influence of his holy doctrines and precepts, by his loving spirit or temper, and by the imitation of his perfect example, is not in them. 2 Cor. 13: 5. Yet alas! they have too frequently thought themselves the only elect, and have 'dealt damnation round the land,' on all who have differed from them.

Page 23, line 20. *modern catholics &c.*

The catholics of the present day are many of them steady friends to christian liberty, and men of excellent character: indeed a spirit of liberality seems to pervade that body of christians in general, at least those of them who live under the British government. The French catholics seem also to be imbued with no small

portion of the benign spirit of charity. Still in the British empire, so long famed for its tolerant laws, the catholics are not suffered to enjoy the same rights and privileges as their fellow subjects. But why are they not? There might be times when policy dictated the propriety of placing them under the restraint of penal laws, and disqualifying statutes; but those times are happily past, to return no more. From the power of the pope, already dwindled into insignificance, a great nation, habituated to government by law, and to protestant rulers, can have nothing to fear. Why not then abolish those laws which infringe the liberties of our catholic brethren? Why not remove such irritating remembrancers of former animosity, discord, and division? This would be one means of uniting Britons, of all parties, as one family, in the support of their common privileges. It may be said catholics were formerly persecutors: but it must be added, so also were protestants. It is wrong to impute to any party of christians the crimes of former generations, and deprive them of the full exercise of liberty because their forefathers were persecutors. God hath never imputed the sins of the fathers to their children, nor punished them for their crimes, unless the children have first made

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those crimes their own by continuing in them. It was too common formerly for all parties to persecute, when they had the power. This is not so much to be imputed to the influence of any particular system, as to the ignorance of christian liberty, and the spirit of bigotry and intolerance, which then generally prevailed. Catholics ought no more to be reproached with the conduct of those of their church who persecuted formerly, than protestants with the persecuting temper and conduct of some of the reformers. Different religious parties have too long indulged in cruel invectives against each other, used their influence to preserve invidious distinctions, and to curtail each others liberties. This has been highly detrimental to the common cause of christianity. It is high time they should open their eyes to their common interests, and become guarantees to each other of the rights of conscience. While the catholics of the present day avow the principles of christian liberty, and demean themselves peaceably towards all other parties, let them be restored to the full enjoyment of their rights, both civil and religious. This, justice, sound policy, and the precepts of the gospel equally demand.



Page 27, line 9. *for the honor of the God of mercy.*

The Saracen generals usually began their letters to the Caliphs with 'In the name of the most merciful God, then followed a shocking detail of bloodshed and massacre; wherein did the conduct of christian persecutors, who burnt men alive for the glory of the Father of mercies, differ from that of those ferocious conquerors? Judging from their conduct, it might be supposed, that mahommedans and christians were worshippers of Moloch, not of the God of mercy.

Page 31, line 14. *Protestants who acknowledged themselves fallible &c.*

When Queen Mary burned those who could not adopt her religious opinions, if any thing could excuse persecution and murder, which nothing can, some apology might be made for her conduct. She had not only private grounds of resentment against the party she persecuted, she supposed the church to which she belonged to be infallible, and that she could not err while she followed the advice of its ministers. She was a weak misguided woman, deluded by superstition. When Queen Elizabeth persecuted and destroyed those who differed from her in

their religious views, the same apology could not be made for her conduct. She was a woman of strong powers and consummate art, she had no private quarrel with those she persecuted, nor did she pretend to infallibility, either in herself, or in the church to which she belonged. Yet Mary, the dupe of a party, has been loaded with infamy, and the intriguing Elizabeth applauded to the skies!

Page 32, line 17. *when used in a bad sense &c.*

The word heresy had not originally a bad sense. Among the ancient Greeks it meant no more than the opinions, or system of a particular sect, or party of philosophers. The apostle certainly used the word in a good sense, when he said before King Agrippa that after the strictest sect, *αἵρεσιν*, literally heresy, of the Jew's religion, he had lived a pharisee. He could not mean to stigmatize the religion of his fathers, nor the sect of the pharisees in particular.

Page 33, line 10. *Religious tests are not necessary to the well being of the community.*

The test act was first passed in England, in a moment of danger and alarm, in order to preserve the nation from popery and arbitrary

power. The Dissenters, with a truly patriotic spirit, at that time sacrificed their private interest to the public good, by subjecting themselves to certain disqualifications, in order to promote the general safety. In consenting to the introduction of the test law they were given to understand that it should be merely a temporary measure, and be continued no longer than the existing danger was got over: in this they were deceived. The injustice and impolicy of religious test laws are manifest. They require that all who are called to fill any office under the government, either civil or military, should, by taking the sacrament at the church of England, express their conformity to the doctrines and ritual, or, at least, their membership, of that church. This is unjust, as it excludes all those who cannot in conscience conform, and from the best of motives are dissenters, whatever may be their wisdom, virtue, or ability, from all places of trust and emolument under his Majesty's government, though they contribute equally with their conforming neighbours to its support, and have done nothing on account of which they ought to be disqualified from sharing in any advantages enjoyed by their fellow subjects. It also implies a stigma upon a large and respectable body of men, who have ever

been obedient to the laws, the firm supporters of the constitution, and the steady friends of peace and good order, by treating them as persons who are not to be trusted, even to hold the pen of an exciseman. It is impolitic ; for by this means the state is deprived of the services of many useful members of the community ; and because by the test laws none but upright conscientious men are excluded ; the unprincipled knave, the man who disregards the dictates of conscience, can take any test, and seem to conform to any ritual. I intend no reflection on those who see no evil in occasional conformity, to God only are they accountable ; and happy is he who is not condemned in the thing which he alloweth. I fear the prostitution of an ordinance of Jesus Christ to mere worldly purposes, in order to secure honors and emoluments to one party of christians, must be reckoned among our national sins.

Page 34, line 4. *A late excellent writer &c.*

The remarks of this writer deserve the most serious consideration. It is not by prosecutions, and the infliction of penalties, that unbelievers are to be either convinced or silenced ; nor does genuine christianity need such carnal

weapons for its defence, its reputation suffers by such auxiliaries. Would we promote true religion, let us separate the precious from the vile, let us free it from every degree of superstition; let us cleave to its pure and holy doctrines, and endeavor to disentangle them from the corrupt mixture of human inventions; let us walk in its divine precepts, and let its benign influences appear in our tempers and our lives. This will be the most effectual way of convincing unbelievers, and of putting to silence gainsayers.

Page 34, line 18. *It is now above 200 years since the commencement of the reformation.*

It is now more than half a century since this was written. It is hoped during that lapse of time something has been done in the work of reformation. Some important doctrines of revelation have been more fully explained, and have met with a better reception than formerly: less of superstition infects the minds of christians: bigotry and party spirit have lost ground: a spirit of free enquiry and liberality of sentiment have made greater progress than formerly. Still much remains to be done: and it is necessary every friend to truth and liberality should

set his shoulder to the work, and do all he can to extirpate bigotry and uncharitableness.

Page 38, line 12. *and all the rest heretics.*

It is much to be lamented that so great a man as Dr. Dupin should fall into this error, and brand with the name of heretics those who dissented from the corrupt mass of christians, during the dark ages of superstition. Let us imagine an ecclesiastical history written by some zealous pagan, before the christian æra: who would be the orthodox, and who the heretics, of such a writer? In his view paganism would be the true religion, judaism the heresy, or perhaps the atheism, of those times, as it denied the existence of the heathen gods. Shadrach, Meshech, and Abednego would be infidels who deserved to be cast into the fiery furnace, for their noncompliance with the orthodox religion of the great King Nebuchadnezzar and his babylonish priests: the jewish martyrs to the doctrine and worship of one God, in the reign of Antiochus, men justly punished for their obstinate adherence to dangerous and blasphemous doctrines. This would be as just as it is for christian writers to represent those as heretics and blasphemers, who refused to

participate in christian idolatry, to bow down to the images which the pope and his clergy, those mystical babylonians, set up. Those who were persecuted and destroyed, by either papists or protestants, because they would neither acknowledge, nor pray to, any God but the one JEHOVAH, the Father of all, could no more be heretics on that account, than the jewish martyrs; for their sentiments and practice were alike.

Page 39, line 12. *the love of the brethren.*

Bigots will endeavor to avoid the force of our Lord's command of brotherly love, and to justify their uncharitableness, by denying that those are their christian brethren who deny their peculiar dogmas; but they ought to recollect that *he* positively asserted, that those who do the will of his Father, the same are *his* brother, and sister, and mother, and that all such shall enter into the heavenly kingdom. Paul asserts, that whosoever shall with his mouth confess the Lord Jesus, and believe in his heart that God raised him from the dead shall be saved. Also John, that whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ is born of God. These things all christians believe and profess. Let bigots consider these matters and tremble at the recollection of their uncharitableness.

Page 39, line 21. *basely calumniated &c.*

Calumny, whatever appearance it assumes, is a monster, whose breath is poisonous. It corrodes and envenoms the breast where it finds a harbor. It blasts the fairest character, and mildews the fruits of genius and virtue. It destroys the harmony of society, plants suspicion where mutual confidence should grow, and turns the milk of human kindness into gall. But even calumny is never so detestable as when it assumes the garb of sanctity, takes the name of zeal for God and religion, and by its pious frauds and holy fibs, veiled in grimace and affected concern for the good of souls, pretends to guard the sanctuary of truth: then indeed it is Satan transformed into an angel of light.

Page 40, line 15. *are the minority &c.*

If the being in a minority, and maintaining unpopular doctrines, constituted men heretics, Jesus and his apostles would have been notorious heretics; for they were a few men, who had all the world against them, and what they taught was highly unpopular. Indeed the best friends of truth have in all ages been unpopular and despised. In ancient times the prophets of the LORD were few in number, the prophets of Baal, a multitude.



Page 41, line 22. *despise and condemn others.*

When christians differ in their opinions, the difference is necessarily equal on both sides. The reputed heretic differs from the reputed orthodox in no more points than the latter differs from the former. Both may be equally sincere and equally confident of the truth of their opinions. The one has no more claim to infallibility than the other. The former has as much right and reason to despise and condemn the latter, as the latter has the former. Both should love and treat each other as brethren.

Page 41, line 23. *A bare glance at history &c.*

It is much to be wished that all christians would pay more attention to ecclesiastical history, and take a more impartial view of the character of men who have not been of their own way of thinking. The former would convince them that in past ages the church was distracted with disputes about frivolous circumstances, that fierce contentions were long maintained about questions which are now laid at rest for ever, that some things which are now universally admitted to be true were once deemed heretical, and other things which are now rejected as false were once generally received as articles of faith, and that had themselves lived a few

centuries back, and maintained their present opinions, they too would have been ranked among the heretics. The latter would convince them that virtue and goodness are not exclusively the appendages of any particular creed, nor good men confined to any particular party. These things would help to liberalize their minds.

Page 43, line 6. *generally taxed with great crimes.*

It has been too much the practice for reputed orthodox writers to abuse those who differ from them. Alexander Ross, in the account of those he is pleased to denominate notorious heretics, annexed to his *Pansebeia*, has given an ample specimen of the injustice and gross abuse of which some writers, calling themselves christian, are capable. The following sample, from his short account of *Arius*, may satisfy the reader of the truth of my assertion. 'About the year of the incarnation of the Son of God, three hundred twenty and three, (says he) hell was delivered of a certain priest at *Alexandria* named *Arius*, a man subtle beyond expression, the trumpet of eloquence, one that seemed to have been cut out for all honesty and elegance, who yet, with the poison of his heresy, and

*Circæan* cups of his destructive doctrine, did in the time of *Silvester* bishop of *Rome* and the Emperor *Constantine*, draw in a manner all christendom to his opinion, and so corrupted some, even great nations in the east, that except a few bishops who stood to the true doctrine, none appeared against him.' Thus, without any proof, Arius is pronounced an offspring of hell, his doctrine poisonous and destructive heresy, he a corrupter of the world. The person who could thus write might be a scholar, he might be thought sound in the faith; but it is evident his pen was not guided by christian charity. As Arius was 'cut out for all honesty and elegance,' he was not likely to corrupt either the taste, or the morals of mankind, nor is it pretended he did either; but he did what in the eyes of some men is infinitely worse, he taught them to reject what the majority of christians have for ages styled the orthodox faith.

Page 43, line 19. *Enthusiasts.*

This is one of the terms of reproach with which christians of different parties have too long stigmatized each other. From so good a writer as Dr. Mosheim we might have expected something more impartial. What a pity he

should apply so odious a name to a large party of christians, merely because they dissented from the reputed catholic church, and spent much time in devotional exercises. Happy will it be when christians leave off abusing each other by the appellation of opprobrious names.

Page 45, line 2. *to worldly power reputed orthodoxy was indebted for the pre-eminence it attained in the world.*

At the time of the reformation, modern orthodoxy formed an alliance with, and was placed under the patronage of, the civil power, in those countries which adopted protestantism. It has ever since been supported by creeds and articles, enforced by law in every national church, and fostered by worldly honors and emoluments. Reputed heterodoxy has never yet had a fair chance of meeting its opponent on even ground. Let reputed orthodoxy come forth from its strong holds of power, and trust to reason and revelation alone for its support, and then see if it can maintain its preponderance.

Page 45, line 23. *in the language of scripture without any mixture of my own.*

This person seems to have had right views of what ought to be deemed articles of faith among christians; i. e. such doctrines as can be expressed in the language of scripture without any human mixture. Had this gospel simplicity been always adhered to, many notions which were voted articles of faith, and became a source of great confusion in the church, had been left as mere opinions, which men might receive or reject without their christianity being questioned.

Page 46, line 13. *were charged with heresy on the most trivial grounds.*

‘It must be confessed (says the author of the *Memoirs of Literature*) that heresies have been strangely multiplied through ignorance and a blind zeal. PHILASTRIUS, in *Catalogo Hæreseon. Tom. v. Biblioth. Patrum Lugd.* 1677, bishop of *Brescia*, in the 4th century, is a remarkable author upon that account. He reckons among the heretics, those who believe that earthquakes are produced by natural causes; whoever says that the number of years from the beginning of the world is uncertain, or that there are many worlds, or that Adam and Eve

were blind before they eat the forbidden fruit, which was the reason why they knew not before that they were naked ; and to mention but one more, those who take in a literal sense what the scripture says of Solomon's having many wives and concubines, do believe that this prince was much addicted to women : PHILASTRIUS calls those heathens, impious men, and ignorant Jews ; and will have the passage to refer to the spiritual gifts which Christ was to bestow on the faithful.'

Page 53, line 10. *commonly called Arians and Socinians.*

How far reputed Arians, in the present day, maintain the same opinions as Arius did in the fourth century may be difficult to ascertain, certain it is that reputed Socinians differ materially from Socinus, on one leading point ; he supposed it right to pray to Christ, and was very strenuous for this practice ; they think it wrong to pray to Christ, and address their devotional exercises to the one God, the Father, only : consequently they ought not to be called Socinians, especially as the name is commonly applied as a term of reproach. Happy would it be if all party names were laid aside among the followers of Jesus, and that, standing fast

in the liberty wherewith he hath made them free, they would content themselves with, and allow to each other, the honorable name of christians. However so long as any names of distinction are preserved, that of Unitarians seems the most appropriate to the parties mentioned above. This name properly belongs to reputed Arians, as well as reputed Socinians: for the former as well as the latter deny the existence of more than one person in the Godhead, and that Christ is the self-existent God, or one of the three persons which some christians suppose to exist in the divine essence. It is a name which fitly applies to all who believe that the one God is but one individual person or subsistence.

Page 53, line 26. *Some of the most respectable of their opponents have given them credit for great learning &c.*

A late excellent prelate says of the unitarians, 'And yet to do right to the writers on that side I must own, that generally they are a pattern of the fair way of disputing, and of debating matters of religion without heat and unbecoming reflections upon their adversaries. They generally argue matters with that temper and gravity, and with that freedom from passion and

transport which becomes a serious and weighty argument: and, for the most part, they reason closely and clearly, with extraordinary guard and caution, with great dexterity and decency, and yet with smartness and subtilty enough; with a very gentle heat, and few hard words, virtues to be praised wherever they are found, yea even in an enemy, and very worthy our imitation.'

'In a word, they are the strongest managers of a weak cause and which is ill founded at the bottom, that perhaps ever meddled with controversy: insomuch that some of the protestants and the generality of the popish writers, and even the Jesuits themselves, who pretend to all the reason and subtilty in the world, are in comparison of *them* but mere scolds and bunglers. Upon the whole matter, they have but this one defect, that they want a good cause and truth on their side, which if they had, they have reason, and wit, and temper enough to defend it.' [See ARCHBISHOP TILLOTSON'S *Sermon on the Divinity of our blessed Savior.*] This is a testimony highly honorable to the unitarian writers. The good prelate, as a trinitarian, would of course think their cause a weak one, and that they had not truth on



their side, otherwise he could not have maintained opposite sentiments, at least not with sincerity; but the want of what he thought truth was all the fault he could find with them. A stronger testimony to the ability and good spirit which they manifested as controversialists, and one from a quarter more respectable, could not well be given.

Religious controversy has generally been conducted with much heat and animosity. It was a rare attainment for the unitarians to be able to conduct it with mildness, and without unseemly reflections on their adversaries; especially when the temper of the times referred to, and the treatment they received from their adversaries, are considered. In an age when religious disputes were generally conducted with much rancor and violence, it was no mean praise for their opponents to be compelled to say they disputed 'without heat and unseemly reflections on their adversaries.'

It is natural to enquire, how came those professors of the gospel whose opinions were deemed the most heretical, to unite with the greatest ability in reasoning so much mildness of spirit and gentleness of manner? Has error a tendency to tame the passions, and fill its advocates with the meekness and gentleness of Christ?

Must there not be some mistake in supposing that those had the weakest cause to defend, and the least truth on their side, who reasoned with the greatest calmness, and manifested the most candor? Can truth have a tendency to inflame the passions, to inspire its votaries with animosity and hatred, to lead them on to cruelty, persecution, and murder? If not, surely those who treated their opponents with unkindness and cruelty, who persecuted and destroyed them, could not have so much truth on their side as has been commonly supposed: and those who manifested a christian spirit, and treated with gentleness those who opposed them, could not be such heretics as they have been represented. Sooner or later it will be found that all bigots and persecutors have had something else to defend besides truth, and that those who have been most humble and candid have had the cause of truth most at heart.

Page 54, line 11. *the sacrifices they have made at the shrine of truth.*

Several persons of eminent learning and piety, when convinced of the truth of the unitarian doctrine, have of late years, for the sake of a good conscience, resigned valuable livings in

the established church, with all future prospects of earthly honor and emolument. No small sacrifice this at the shrine of truth. Among those who have thus nobly dared to act in opposition to popular opinion, and their own worldly interests, the name of THEOPHILUS LINDSEY will long be mentioned with veneration, by the friends of truth and liberty, as having taken the lead, and set a noble example of integrity and virtue. Let those narrow-minded beings who will not allow such men to be christians, merely because they think their opinions erroneous, lay aside their bigotry and try to imitate such exalted virtue.

Page 55, line 3. *William Whiston.*

This good man was expelled the mathematical chair at Cambridge, and driven from that seat of learning, because he could not approve of certain creeds, &c. His mathematical knowledge, his piety and undeviating integrity, were of no avail when he fell under the charge of heretical pravity.

Page 55, line 6. *John Locke.*

Even the benevolent Dr. Watts thought it necessary to invoke charity, that by her aid he might find this truly great man in heaven. (See

his Lyric Poems.) Ah! prejudice, how hast thou narrowed the most generous minds! Yet the good Doctor, narrowly escaped, if he did escape, falling himself under the charge of heretical pravity.

Page 56, line 1. *Doctor Priestley.*

His death was noticed, in a periodical publication, more distinguished by its devotedness to the service of reputed orthodoxy, and the rooted opposition of its conductors to such opinions as the Doctor maintained, than by the liberality of its plan, or the impartiality of the writers, who contribute the articles which usually fill its pages. In such a work Doctor Priestley certainly would not receive too high a character. The writer of the article alluded to evidently designed to depreciate his theological opinions and labors; for he professes to lament 'The degraded employment of his noble talents and uncommon endowments to a purpose totally subversive of the dearest interests and best hopes of sinful man:' yet he is compelled to add, 'As a man of moral character and amiable manners, as a sufferer by cruel persecution, as a most extensive general scholar rather than a profound one, and as a perspicuous writer,—he

holds a place of high and merited honor. His works in History, Criticism, and some important parts of Metaphysics, will be a lasting monument of his fine and richly cultivated mind. In his philosophical labors, the scientific world has been deeply interested, and is under great obligations to his singular and prolific felicity in experiments, his indefatigable exertions, and his brilliant and truly useful discoveries: for the latter the manufacturers of this country ought to have no small sense of gratitude. In his works on the External Evidences of Revelation, while we deplore their sad deficiency, we truly admire his clearness of conception, his masterly arrangement of thought, and his force of reasoning.' (See the Evangelical Magazine for May, 1804.) This from the pen of an adversary is no mean praise. In a work in which only one side can obtain a hearing, it is easy for the superficial bigot to maintain his ground, and calumniate his opponents, but no praise will be given to the reputed heretic but what a sense of his superior worth extorts.

Page 56, line 8. *died in the belief of what have been long thought by reputed orthodox men, the most heretical opinions.*

Stricken with the excellency of Dr. Priestley's character, some persons have labored to persuade themselves and others that a change might take place in his religious views in the last moments of his life: they seem sensible that a man of so much real worth ought not to be lost, that nothing but what they suppose his erroneous opinions could prevent his salvation: but they are too illiberal to admit that dying in the belief of those opinions he could be saved: however there is every possible reason to conclude that he died in the full belief of the same doctrines as he maintained while living. It discovers great ignorance of the human mind and its operations, to suppose that opinions which have been formed with the greatest deliberation, which have resulted from the deepest research and closest thought, and which for years have been consolidated in a regular system, can be totally changed in a moment. To suppose any man shall be damned merely for his opinions, however erroneous they may be, shows great inattention to the declarations of scripture, which teach that every one shall be re-

warded or punished according to his works; and that Dr. P's works were good no one will deny. To suppose men of virtue and piety will be damned is a libel on the righteous governor of the universe.

Page 56, line 26. *Dr. Whitby, Dr. Watts, and Mr. R. Robinson.*

Dr. Whitby in the latter part of his life wrote what is called his last thoughts, in which he retracted his trinitarian notions. From Dr. Watts' latter publications it is evident he had given up the notion of three co-equal, co-eternal persons in the Godhead. Mr. Robinson's plea for the divinity of Christ is still spoken of by some as unanswerable, perhaps they have not been candid enough to read Mr. Lindsey's reply to that book, or they could hardly think it unanswerable. They ought however to know that Mr. Robinson himself, so far from thinking his plea unanswerable, gave up the doctrine of the trinity as indefensible, and died a unitarian. It may surprise some persons to find a Whitby, a Watts, and a Robinson, among reputed heretics.

Page 57; line 22. *intended to intimidate and restrain from free enquiry after truth.*

It is unmanly, disingenuous, and an imposition on their hearers, for men, professing themselves christian teachers, instead of speaking the truth in love, to brand those who differ from them with opprobrious names; by which much prejudice is created, free enquiry after truth prevented, the timid and uninformed are too much alarmed to attend with impartiality to the arguments of their opponents, and bigotry and unchristian feelings are promoted. It is much to be lamented that men, sustaining the venerable character of ministers of Jesus Christ, should degrade themselves by stooping to such mean and pitiful artifices in supporting what they think divine truth.

Page 63, line 18. *that they should burn him and his books.*

Protestants have all along condemned the papists for burning the persons and writings of those they deemed heretics: yet alas! they have sometimes imitated the men they condemned: consequently, by allowing and condemning the same practice, they have fallen into gross self-contradiction. John Fox, (in his Acts and Monuments) after speaking of



the papists burning heretics, says, 'And yet the malignity of those adversaries doeth not here cease. For, after that the fire hath consumed their bodies, then they fall upon their books; and condemn them, in like manner to be burned. And no man must be so hardy as to read them, or keep them, under pain of *heresie*. But before they have abolished these books, first they gather articles out of them, such as they list themselves: and so perversely wrest and wring them, after their own purpose, falsely and contrary to the right meaning of the author; as they seem after their putting down, to be most *heretical* and *execrable*. Which being done, and the books then abolished, that no man may confer them with their articles, to spie their falsehood; then they divulge and set abroad those articles, in such sort as princes and people may see what *heretics* they were. And this is the rigor of their process and proceeding against those persons, whom thus they purpose to condemn and burn,' This passage from our great martyrologist, may serve to caution the reader not to conclude that the doctrines of reputed heretics were so absurd and monstrous as their enemies have represented, and lead them to conceive that probably the opinions of Servetus were much more rational

and scriptural than has been generally apprehended ; for as the papists treated those they termed heretics, so both papists and protestants treated him.

Page 65, line 20. *have preserved &c.*

On this subject Dr. Benson has some excellent remarks : he says, ‘ When violent men and fierce persecutors have procured the death of any one who differs from them, and have burned his books, I confess I am greatly inclined to call in question their representations of his opinions : and désiré further evidence, concerning the truth and reality ; or a more fair, candid, and impartial representation of what his sentiments really were.’

‘ If his worst opinions are fit to be picked out of his writings and published, in order to be confuted : why may we not read them in his own writings ? Why is he not permitted to speak for himself ? Surely every man best understands his own sentiments ; and his own writings are the most likely to give one the most just idea of them.’

‘ We know very well, that a man’s own words may be so quoted, as to represent his opinions in quite another manner, than they appear in his own writings, when read in their proper

connexion. How much more when a word is added or left out ; or another substituted in its place.'

'What party will allow, that their fiercest adversaries have justly represented their sentiments: notwithstanding they have quoted their very words ; and, perhaps, refer to the page, from which they have copied them?'

'One might mention authors, who, in the heat of controversy, have misrepresented the opinions of their adversaries ; even when their adversaries have been alive, and their books very common. What would such have done with respect to the dead ; especially if their books had been burned ; and a fair representation of their real sentiments could not have been come at?'

Page 66, line 22. *ought to be read with much caution.*

We ought to read with caution the accounts which writers of any party have given of those who differ from them ; for it is greatly to be lamented that few are to be found who have done justice to their opponents. that those who all profess to be disciples of the same master should have so frequently abused and misrepresented each other. How rarely have ecclesias-

tical writers given a fair statement of the opinions of the different denominations of christians whom they have professed to describe ! Party spirit has too generally warped their judgment and guided their pen : there are however some noble exceptions, men whose love of truth, and their christian candor, have raised them superior to prejudice and party influence. Among writers of this latter description, MR. J. EVANS, author of 'A sketch of the different denominations into which the christian world is divided,' is eminently distinguished. This amiable writer, imbued with christian charity, aiming to promote mutual love among all the professors of the gospel, has given such a fair and liberal description of the different parties into which the church of Christ is divided, as is calculated to diminish prejudice and party spirit, and to lead to a better understanding and an increase of goodwill among the followers of Jesus.

Page 68, line 4. *they were not likely to desist from loading his name with infamy.*

Had Dr. Priestley lived two or three centuries sooner, it is more than probable, not only his house and all it contained would have been burned, but that he also, with his valuable writings, would have been committed to the

flames. In what light would his enemies then have represented him and his opinions? In the present enlightened period he has been grossly misrepresented. Many persons, who are totally unacquainted with his writings, suppose him to have lived and died an enemy and subverter of the gospel. If in a country where a high degree of religious liberty is enjoyed, the greatest philosopher in his day, the ablest advocate for divine revelation, the firmest friend to truth and virtue, could not escape reproach and persecution, what would his lot have been in a dark and intolerant age? What ideas should we form of this great man if we judged merely by what his enemies write and say of him and his works? We should probably form as unfavorable an idea of him as many have formed of Servetus. If we imagine him to have lived about the time of the reformation, and that he and his writings had been burnt by the reformers, we cannot conceive that his name would have come down to us otherwise than loaded with obloquy. The respectable friends of Dr. Priestley, his numerous publications, and successful labors, will soon dispel the shades in which calumny would involve his name; his reputation will shine with increasing splendor, and be cherished by all good men. Servetus

was unsuccessful, *his* writings were destroyed; yet his memory shall be blessed, and his works shall follow him.

Page 70, line 16. *Such was the christian religion as taught by its founders.*

Had the christian religion been maintained, by all its professors, in its original purity, uncorrupted by error, untarnished by superstition, unpolluted by bigotry, persecution, and unrighteous conduct, infidelity had never reared its head on christian ground. While modern deism derives all that is valuable in it, respecting the being and perfections of God, a future life, and moral rectitude, from the light which the gospel has diffused, it owes its existence, as the enemy of divine revelation, to the gross corruptions of christianity and the abominable spirit and conduct of its professors. Where superstition has been the most rank, and professed christians the most corrupt, infidelity has been the most rife. Not to the extension of liberty and tolerant laws is the production of scepticism to be attributed; it was engendered amid the darkness and corruption of intolerant times, and when the sun of liberty diffused its cheering rays it stretched its wings and showed itself openly.

Page 70, line 19. *To its primitive simplicity, &c. it should be the aim of every reformer to restore it.*

Christians can never return to the purity and simplicity of primitive christianity, till they reform their religious faith and practice by the New Testament only, and reduce the whole to that original standard. While unscriptural creeds, articles of faith devised by fallible men, and rituals composed of discordant materials borrowed from the erroneous compositions of superstitious times, are retained, corruption will be perpetuated, and the glory of the gospel obscured. The reformers instead of bringing every thing to the original standard, and rejecting whatever was contrary to the New Testament, suffered themselves to be biased in favor of many things because of their antiquity (as if time could convert error into truth) which were incapable of bearing the touch of reason or the test of scripture. After rejecting a few of the grosser parts of popery, they contented themselves with new modelling the rest, and imposing it, in a new edition, on mankind. Hence the reformed religion greatly needs reforming,

Page 73, line 16. *the whole was gradually turned into mystery.*

It ought to be remembered that mystery is the first name among the titles of the mother of harlots, as described in the apocalypse. A more complete method of defeating the end of divine revelation, and of rendering it a nullity, could not be devised, than to bring mankind to believe its contents to be altogether mysterious; for mystery and revelation are terms of opposite meaning. Yet so deeply rooted and widely spread were the corruptions of christianity, that for ages every thing in religion was regarded as a mystery, the scriptures were supposed to contain a mystical sense, and men were required, not to reason, but to believe implicitly. Nothing could be more convenient for the priests who aimed at dominion over the faith and consciences of the people.

Page 75, line 8. *antichristian spirit of persecution.*

In retaining the spirit of persecution the reformers retained the worst part of popery. However corrupt the doctrines and superstitious the worship of the church of Rome, it was the spirit of persecution that gave ostensibility to those



corruptions, by preventing their detection and exposure. It was this spirit that banished free enquiry, arrested the progress of information, perpetuated every abuse, and gave the church, instead of a lamblike appearance, the semblance of a great red dragon. Whatever mistakes the reformers retained, as the fruit of their former connexion with the mother of harlots, they would have been detected and exposed, had they not appointed this gorgon to watch over them, and to destroy all who should attempt their exposure.

Page 76, line 13 *defiled their consciences.*

It is too common for persons to conclude that if their consciences do not condemn them their actions must be right ; but in this they may be much mistaken. If a man acts contrary to his conscience he certainly acts wrong ; for he does not act uprightly : yet conscience is by no means an infallible rule of right and wrong. If a man's ideas, on moral subjects, be corrupt, his conscience will be corrupt ; for conscience always follows the ideas, and condemns, or approves, according to the ideas entertained of the nature of actions. Paul's conscience did not condemn him when persecuting the church of God ; the reason was he had wrong ideas of

things, on the ground of which he acted, and supposed he was acting right, of course his conscience could not, at the time, condemn him; but when his mind was better informed, he perceived he had acted wrong, then his conscience condemned his actions. A man cannot have a right consciousness any further than his mind is rightly informed. Hence the importance of using all possible means to attain right views on moral subjects.

Page 77, line 10. *Spiritual courts.*

Such courts no doubt had their use amidst the darkness and barbarity of the middle ages, and so had chivalry; but both are superseded by the regular institutions and administration of justice, in later and more enlightened times. However restrained in their power, and cramped in their operation, spiritual courts have ever been, and ever will be, inconsistent with christian liberty and the full operation of civil laws. Popish in their origin, formed to be the engine of ecclesiastical domination, and oppressive in their operation, they can be of no use in a civilized nation, which has a legislature, written laws, and regular courts of judicature; but, whenever active, their activity is felt as a griev-

ance. By most men of information, a spiritual court is regarded either as a nullity, or as an excrescence on the British constitution, the removal of which would be the removal of a deformity, and could be injurious to no one. What can a protestant nation, which has the happiness to be governed by law, and to enjoy the invaluable right of trial by jury, have to do with a court in which no civil judge presides, no jury of the accused person's peers are assembled, the common law of the land is not the rule of judgment, and which is evidently a relic of popery?

Page 83, line 12. *all parties persecuted when they had the power.*

This continued to be the case long after the æra of the reformation, with some honorable exceptions. There existed one party of christians, before the stormy days of intolerance were past, who kept themselves pure from the antichristian spirit of persecution—the people called quakers. They were not more distinguished by the plainness of their attire, and the simplicity of their manners, than by their firmness in suffering for conscience sake, their steady attachment to christian liberty, and the liberal maxims they adopted. Uniformly they

disavowed the principle, and as uniformly abstained from the practice, of persecution. It cannot be said they never had the power of persecuting those who differed from them; for when that ornament of human nature, William Penn, formed a colony in North America, for which he had to legislate, full opportunity was given for the adoption of intolerant laws and the practice of persecution, could he have brought himself to act upon the corrupt maxims adopted by other parties when in power; but the god-like man, though invested with power, violated none of the rights of conscience, he stood firm to the principles in defence of which he had suffered, and the liberal spirit of the gospel appeared in the whole tenor of his conduct. When arbitrary governors and their intolerant laws are buried in oblivion, the memory of Penn shall be cherished by all the virtuous and the good. His name shall continue to be remembered with veneration, by the Anglo-Americans in their cities, by the Indians under their oaks, generations yet unborn shall speak of him as an eminent servant of God and friend of mankind. I can wish nothing better to the society of Friends than that a double portion of Penn's spirit may abide with them, that they may ever

hold fast the liberal maxims, and pursue the pure and generous course, which he recommended, both by precept and example.

Page 93, line 26. *While the Moors ruled in that country the people were free in all matters of religion and conscience, and arts, manufactures, and trade flourished.*

The Saracen conquests promoted the revival of arts and sciences in Europe, and no doubt disseminated the knowledge and worship of one God. The following description given by Mr. Robinson, of the city of Granada and its environs in the times of the Moors, in contrast with its present state, is truly affecting. He says, 'In the times of the Moors the city of Granada and its environs unfurled the beauties of an earthly paradise. The city, thronged like a hive, was a storehouse of plenty. There the wealthy Jews distributed raw silk to the manufacturers, who returned it wrought, and received and enjoyed the fruit of their labor. There the farms, and villages, and hamlets of twenty miles round met with a ready sale for corn, and figs, and raisins, and every species of fruits, fresh or preserved. Thither the miners conveyed silver and gold, the precious produce of the mountains, and there specie was in greater plenty than in

any other country of Europe. Every street had its fountain, and every house its pipe of water. Here huge warehouses richly stored, or royal arsenals, lifted their heads; and there the magnificent houses of merchants, magistrates, officers of the army, and manufacturers, filled the eye with objects of art, opulence, and ease. Eighty thousand families inhabited the city; and they frequently sent out armies of thirty thousand foot and ten thousand horse. The country round was divided into little freeholds all clad with verdure and vegetable productions: or into gardens and vineyards in the highest cultivation: or into large farms, where flocks and herds, and herbage and corn rewarded the industrious husbandman: or into country seats, in the adjacencies of which were villages and towns. Within the city stood mosques, and churches, and schools; and within sight of the walls were reckoned fifty colleges and places of worship, and above three hundred water mills. Over all, the royal palace of the Alhambra built with red bricks, on a high hill stood, the silver towers glittering like stars among the trees. Then there were no heretics at Granada. In the same street a man might see, without wondering at the sight, the snug monk trudging along with

his crown shaven and in the habit of his order; the mussulman sailing in his striped robes of Persian silk or cotton; the rabbi plodding in the display of his silver beard; the nun tripping in her weeds and her vail; and the honest manichean carrying home his work to Aaron the Jew. 'Alas!' exclaims a modern traveller, 'the glories of Granada have passed away with its old inhabitants; its streets are choaked with filth, its aqueducts crumbled to dust, its woods destroyed, its territory depopulated, its trade lost; in a word, every thing except the church and the law in a most deplorable situation.' Bleak and blasted hills covered with ruins every where excite the curiosity and the pity of the observer. The clergy comfort themselves under the loss of all by boasting that Granada hath the dignity of being an archiepiscopal see, that mosques are converted into churches, and that the want of popular affluence is amply supplied by the number and sanctity of the priests.' [Ecclesiastical Researches, p. 255, 256.]

Page 95, line 26. *He might converse with Jews and Mahommedans,———and be instructed by them in the doctrine of the divine unity.*

The Jews during their long dispersion among all nations have maintained inviolably the doc-

trine and worship of one God, and have no doubt been eminently instrumental in preserving that doctrine in the world : on this account mankind are under great obligations to them, notwithstanding their rejection of christianity, The Mahommedans have much contributed to the dissemination of the doctrine of the divine unity : whatever is false or bad in their religion, this is certainly of the first importance. It could no more be a crime for Servetus, or any other man, to learn the unity of God from Jews or Mahommedans, than it was for the apostle Paul to quote with approbation passages from the heathen poets. Truth is truth where-soever found.

Page 95, line 27. *The bold scenery of nature &c.*

Navarre, situated amid lofty mountains, is said to present to the eye of the spectator a landscape truly sublime. 'When travellers of taste pass over some parts of the Pyrenees, they are in raptures, and at a loss for words to express what they behold. The landscape, say they, on every side is divine.' These mountains were for ages an asylum to the oppressed and persecuted. Here they enjoyed liberty and dwelt secure. Here the freeborn mind could expand; the splendor of the scenery would elevate the



thoughts, and the grandeur of nature fill the soul.

Page 101, line 16. *was always afraid disputes about the trinity would break out, some time or other.*

Why was Melancthon so much alarmed with the apprehension of disputes breaking out about the trinity? He and many others had raised disputes about transubstantiation, which the romanists thought as true, and held as sacred, as the reformers did the trinity. Disputes about transubstantiation produced many tragic scenes, disputes about the trinity could do no more. If the reformers thought godly honesty required them to oppose transubstantiation, though they could not help foreseeing what tragedies their opposition would occasion, why might not others think godly honesty required them to oppose the trinity without regarding the tragedies their conduct might innocently occasion? Oh! but transubstantiation was a false and corrupt doctrine. The romanists thought the contrary, they believed it to be an essential doctrine of christianity, and quoted many passages of scripture in its support, and they were the majority. But the romanists did not understand the scriptures, they were mistaken in the sense

they gave to the passages they quoted. They said the same thing of the reformists, and alleged that transubstantiation was a great mystery, that it must be believed, though it could not be comprehended. The reformers urged that the doctrine was unreasonable; for bread and wine could not be changed into the real body and blood of Christ, and that common sense perceived it to remain real bread and wine after consecration. Very true, this is all perfectly right; but why is not reason and common sense to be used in the explanation of one subject in religion as well as another? Because transubstantiation and the trinity are very different matters. The latter is a real mystery and must be believed without being understood; it is supported by many passages of scripture, and reason must bow to revelation; besides, it has been believed for ages by the majority of christians. These are the same arguments that the romanists used to support transubstantiation: and why are we to believe what we cannot understand in the one case any more than in the other? Why may not the scriptures have been mistaken and misapplied by the advocates for the trinity, as well as by those for transubstantiation? Why should the opinion of the majority be a better authority for the belief of the

former than the latter? Is it more unreasonable to believe that bread and wine are turned into real flesh and blood by the act of consecration than it is to believe that three distinct persons are but one individual being, that a son can be as old as his father, and that a being who was born and died is the uncreated and immortal God? He who can believe the latter need not stumble at the former.

The disputes about transubstantiation produced many 'tragedies.' True, but that was not the fault of the protestants, nor any necessary consequence of the controversy; the proscribing laws and persecuting spirit of the church of Rome produced those 'tragedies.' The same thing must be said respecting the trinitarian controversy. Had it not been for the proscribing laws and persecuting temper of trinitarians the controversy had been bloodless, nor would the opposition of antitrinitarians have produced any 'tragedies.' Had not the man who seemed alarmed with the apprehension of tragic scenes, arising from disputes about the trinity, and others of his party, stirred up persecution, those shocking scenes would not have taken place. Had he and other protestant leaders, instead of anathematizing reputed heretics, and defending persecution, employed themselves in

preaching peace, christian liberty, and mutual charity, those 'tragedies' which disgraced the reformation would not have been produced.

The fears which Melancthon expressed respecting the doctrine of the trinity being controverted, implied a secret dread that the subject would not bear to be deeply examined; otherwise what evil could he have to apprehend from its being discussed. The reformers were not afraid of entering the lists of controversy with the papists, why should they be afraid of doing the same with the antitrinitarians, if conscious they had as much truth on their side in the one case as in the other? The fact is, in disputing with the latter they found themselves standing on popish ground, and they used popish weapons; they wrapped themselves in the garb of mystery, and drew the sword of persecution; proscription, dungeons, and devouring flames were their auxiliaries. They needed not such weapons when they contended with the papists; then they had reason and scripture to support them; they could appeal from popes and councils to prophets and apostles, and plead the dictates of common sense; they could assert the rights of conscience, and contend for the liberty wherewith Christ had made them free. It was quite different when they contended with anti-

the envy and malice of his illiterate fraternity, who found no difficulty in persuading the common people that he had dealings with the devil, was restrained from reading lectures; his writings were confined to his own convent; and, finally, he himself confined to his cell, when sixty-four years of age. The doctrine of Aristotle was once held as sacred as any other part of reputed orthodoxy. Galileo, the famous mathematician and astronomer, for asserting in opposition to it, the truth of the Copernican system, which he confirmed by several new arguments, was cited before the inquisition; and, after some months imprisonment, could not obtain his liberty without promising that he would renounce his heretical opinions, and not defend them by word or writing.' But having afterwards, in 1632, published at Florence his 'Dialogues of the two great systems of the world, the Ptolemaic and Copernican,' he was again cited before the inquisition, and committed to the prison of that ecclesiastical court at Rome. In June, in the same year, the congregation convened, and in his presence pronounced sentence against him and his books, obliging him to abjure his errors in the most solemn manner, and committed him to the prison of their office during pleasure; where he was detained till

1634, and his Dialogues of the system of the world were burnt at Rome. Nothing can be a greater obstacle to improvement than a blind adherence to received opinions and established systems. Yet with many nothing can be right that militates against their preconceived notions; every thing must be done according to some prescribed rule, and be supported by some precedent. As if human knowledge and institutions were not capable of constant improvement.

Page 116, line 12. *neither presuming to offer any force to the other.*

The true method of preserving peace between christians of discordant opinions is for them mutually to respect each others rights and liberties. There have been, and still are men of learning and piety among christians of all parties. The church of Rome, notwithstanding all its corruptions, may boast of many great and distinguished characters, who would be an honor to any community. The virtuous and good deserve our respect, to whatever party they may belong, or whatever we may think wrong in their religious system. Who can help thinking with pleasure of the eminent piety and benevo-

lence of a Fenelon, though a catholic prelate, or of the extensive learning and unbounded liberality of a Geddes, though a catholic priest? Every generous mind will highly esteem such characters, however much it may deplore their mistakes. After hearing one reformer call Servetus a beast, another declare that his bowels ought to be torn out, after seeing him bereaved of repose through the malevolence of bigotry, and wounded by calumny, even among protestants, it is truly cheering to see a catholic archbishop, stretch out to him the hand of friendship, and offer him an asylum in his palace. For the minister of a church professing the highest toned orthodoxy and infallibility to receive with cordiality one of the most notorious of reputed heretics, discovered a great and generous soul. The conduct of this worthy prelate forms a fine contrast with that of the great protestant leaders. Their bigotry and persecuting temper stands reproved by the conduct of one whom they would call a minister of antichrist. The love of literature and science is calculated to liberalize the mind. This prelate it seems was a lover of learning and learned men: consequently, though his creed enjoined him to hate, condemn and destroy heretics, his bosom glowed with generous sentiments towards Servetus; for he

knew him to be a man of learning and good character : therefore he admitted him as an inmate in his palace. This prelatical munificence ought to be the more noticed because it was rarely to be met with in those days, and because, while so many protestants showed themselves influenced by the spirit of popery, it proves that a popish prelate could exercise no low degree of christian charity.

Page 116, line 20. *adjust all their public measures by established rules of despotism, which they inwardly disapprove.*

Whatever degree of culpability may attach to those men, who, though virtuous and liberal in private life, adjust their public measures by established rules of despotism, those corrupt maxims and institutions by which they are seduced, or impelled to act contrary to their native goodness and liberal principles, cannot be too warmly execrated. Nothing can more strikingly display the baneful tendency of bad institutions, either civil or religious, than their mischievous influence on the conduct of men otherwise virtuous and good. Ecclesiastical despotism dazzled with the pomp of ceremonies, lulled the conscience with delusive notions, bribed



the passions with worldly honors and emoluments, excited servility and terror by the disgrace and suffering impendent on disobedience to its cruel mandates; thus it seduced or terrified, not only the untutored multitude, but many persons of learning and humanity, into a compliance with its arbitrary laws, and induced them to subserve its nefarious purposes. It is natural to censure men of learning, genius, and good private character, when they suffer themselves to become the tools of despotism, the instruments of injustice, and to be brought to acquiesce in measures which they inwardly disapprove. Their conduct certainly deserves censure, but the censure ought to be blended with pity. They are seduced from the paths of virtue by powerful temptations, and are gradually led to the commission of crimes at which they once shuddered. 'Is thy servant a dog that he should do this thing,' said an ancient courtier to the prophet of Israel, when he heard pointed out the horrid cruelties he would perpetrate. A change in his circumstances took place, he did not resist the first impulses of a corrupt ambition, his heart became hardened, and he acted the abominable part which before seemed so abhorrent to his nature. True greatness is displayed by the resistance of powerful temp-

tations, and an undeviating course of virtue and goodness amid seductions and impending dangers. The man who would preserve himself uniformly virtuous must resist all the corrupt maxims of the world, and prepare himself to meet disgrace and suffering rather than act wrong. When will the rulers of the world abandon every principle that is contrary to strict equity, and that crooked policy by which so many great characters have been seduced and led astray?

Page 125, line 1. *promised to each of them a gratuity of a hundred crowns.*

Servetus proved his sincerity and disinterestedness, by sacrificing so much property, in printing a book which endangered his safety. Whatever may be thought of his opinions, his integrity cannot be questioned. A man of his penetration would not deliberately expend a considerable sum of money, and expose his reputation and his life, to propagate what he did not believe and think important. What motive could he have to persevere in so dangerous a work but the love of truth and a desire to enlighten mankind? Some say he was 'very head-strong in his sentiments,' and ascribe his con-

duct to obstinacy ; but they might with as much propriety say that all the martyrs were headstrong and obstinate. What, if a man will not desist from promoting what he believes to be the truth of God, and meanly sacrifice his conscience, and what he apprehends to be the cause of Christ, to his worldly interest and personal safety, is he therefore to be denominated headstrong and obstinate ? What, is Servetus to be denominated obstinate because he would not submit his judgment to John Calvin, and is the same John Calvin to be praised for his christian firmness in refusing to submit his judgment either to the pope of Rome, or the magistrates of Geneva ? Was not Calvin headstrong and obstinate when he suffered himself to be banished Geneva, by the syndics and citizens, rather than desist from his favorite plan of establishing a spiritual court, or when he determined afterwards that there should be no appeal from the consistory to the senate, or when he said he would suffer himself to be massacred rather than make use of his hand to present the holy mysteries to those who were judged unworthy of them ? No, we shall be told, this was holy zeal and christian firmness : and had Servetus' opinions been calvinistic his perseverance in maintaining them would also have

been called holy zeal and christian firmness : nor was his zeal the less holy, or his firmness the less christian, because his opinions happened to be what the majority of christians thought heterodox.

Page 135, line 24. *who shall call Jesus Christ an idol.*

This was a gross calumny. Servetus never called Jesus Christ an idol ; on the contrary he spoke of him as being truly the Son of God, and attributed to him very high dignity and power. Is there no medium between saying that he is the self-existent God and making him an idol ? It is manifest injustice to charge those with making Jesus an idol who acknowledge him to be the Christ, the Son of the living God, and obey his gospel. Of this injustice reputed orthodox persons have often been guilty. It might with more propriety be said that those, who leaving the plain declarations of scripture concerning Christ, set up their own imaginations as divine truth, and pay their devotions to three ideal beings, whom they call three persons in one God, and of whom they suppose Christ to be one, make him an idol ; but we wish not to adopt language so offensive.

Paul speaks of an idol as being nothing in the world, merely a creature of the imagination ; it follows, that not those who speak of things according to their reality, but those who set up imaginary objects of worship, are makers of idols.

Page 174, line 16. *continues to disapprove the anabaptists, who oppose the magistrates.*

Servetus did not mean to insinuate that all who were called anabaptists opposed the magistrates, or that he disapproved of all who were called by that name ; for on the subject of baptism he evidently agreed with them ; but only that he disapproved of such as opposed the magistrates : he evidently referred to what had taken place at Munster in Germany. The peasants in Germany, grievously oppressed by their lords, had revolted, and insisted on a redress of their grievances. Muncer and his followers, who were baptists, persecuted by Luther and his party, were drawn in to unite with the rustics in the common cause of liberty. They drew up a memorial, in which they set forth their claims to better treatment. Luther stimulated the princes to destroy the insurgents, they were destroyed ; and among the rest many of the baptists. The quarrel was not however

about baptism, but about the feudal system and religious tyranny. Nor ought this affair to be mentioned to the discredit of the baptists, who have for ages been as peaceable as any other party of christians.

Page 208, line 1. *There is no crime or heresy so great as that of asserting that the soul is mortal.*

By the mortality of the soul Servetus seems to intend the denial of man's future existence. He could not suppose the denial of a separate state merely, could involve such consequences as he mentions; or lay so much stress on the assertion of the entire mortality of man in the present state. His saying that to assert the mortality of the soul is to disbelieve the resurrection, makes it evident that by the mortality of the soul *he* meant a denial of the future immortality of man.

Page 208, line 11. *I desire that my false accuser should be punished, &c.*

This was certainly wrong, it would have been better for him to have rendered only good for evil; nor was there any chance for him to bring Calvin to an account for his conduct, and his demanding justice upon him only irritated him

the more. It is supposed Calvin had some enemies in Geneva, who disliked his arbitrary measures, and that they stirred up Servetus, and encouraged him to hope he might procure his own liberation by demanding justice on Calvin. It appears that one of the magistrates, whom Calvin calls *Cæsar Comicus*, did his utmost to save the life of Servetus, by endeavoring to have his cause removed to the council of two hundred; he might advise the prisoner to impeach his accuser as a measure that would be advantageous to him. Beza says that one of those he calls the faction whispered to Servetus whatever might serve to confirm him in what he calls his obstinacy. The author of the *Biblio. Angl.* mentions a note written by a minister of Geneva in the 16th century, in which the writer says 'I have received information from a certain person, that some of the chief of the council, that they might show their disaffection to Calvin through the Spaniard, prompted the defendant to utter the most injurious things possible against Calvin, insinuating to him, that this very conduct of his would procure him the favor of certain great men of the council.' Thus it appears that Servetus was urged by professed friends to utter injurious expressions

against his accuser. This is some excuse for his conduct.

Page 228, line 8. *that no one may be so bold for the time to come as to publish new doctrines.*

Who could have expected such language as this from a reformed minister, from one of those whom the whole catholic church would charge with having so lately introduced and published to the whole world a system of new and heretical doctrines! For the pope of Rome to have used such language would have appeared nothing extraordinary; but to hear it from a protestant minister so soon after the commencement of the reformation, might well excite surprise. What did the reformers suppose they had so completely detected and exploded every error, so fully brought to light the whole truth, as to erect a perfect standard of opinions, from which no one might dare to deviate? Did they imagine they had superseded all further discovery and improvement in knowledge? Alas! how soon after they had broken off from the church of Rome did they assume the same tone of infallibility and proscription which they condemned in that church! In all ages it has been too common to make an outcry about new and strange doctrines. The Stoics and Epicureans



at Ephesus denounced Paul as a teacher of new and strange doctrines; but they were much more candid than many professed christians have been; for they said 'we would know what this new doctrine whereof thou speakest is,' whereas many professors of the gospel are so prejudiced that they will not hear any thing that is contrary to their preconceived notions. In all ages truths which have been forgotten when revived have been esteemed, by many, new and strange doctrines, and every new discovery exploded. To reject any doctrine because it may appear new, and prohibit whatever is not already understood and received, is to proscribe all human improvement, to render any further attention to the scriptures unnecessary, and to produce a state of torpidity throughout the christian world.

Page 239, line 7. *having invoked the name of God, &c.*

How greatly must the minds of men be perverted before they can think of invoking the name of God when about to commit the crime of murder, before they can condemn their fellow creatures to be burnt alive in the name of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost! For the worshippers of Moloch to invoke that

grim idol before they offered to him a human sacrifice might be in character ; but for christians, for protestants, to invoke the name of the God of love, who hath said, he that sheddeth man's blood by man shall his blood be shed, when about to destroy a person who had committed no crime, is most absurd and insulting to the Almighty. For them, when condemning a fellow creature to the most cruel tortures, to be consumed in the devouring flames, merely because he did not agree with them in opinion, to say they acted in the name, or by the authority, of the Father of mercies, of his Son, who declared that he came not to destroy men's lives but to save them, and of the Holy Spirit, which is a spirit of love, is most horrid, and the foulest blot that could be fixed on the holy christian religion. They might talk of Servetus being a blasphemer, but if there be any blasphemy more horrid than all other, it surely must be the blasphemy of making the Almighty the approver of murder, the patron of murderers, and a party in persecution and the atrocious crime of burning men alive for their opinions. How different was calvinism, as its influence appeared in the conduct of John Calvin, the church at Geneva, and the magistrates of that city, to the mild and merciful religion of Jesus

Christ; as exemplified in the conduct of its founder, his apostles, and the primitive christians !

Page 276, line 1: *The reformers guilty of manifest inconsistency.*

In the year 1520, Martin Luther published a small tract in German on christian liberty, which was read with uncommon avidity. In it ' he speaks of what he calls spiritual liberty, that is, the freedom of the spirit or mind in matters of religion, and he assigns three causes of bondage, sins, laws, and mandates, which naturally means our sinful passions, the laws of magistrates, and the canons of the church. He illustrates the subject by observing, that all christians were kings and priests unto God, and that though it would be neither decent nor possible for every man to be a minister, yet that the distinction of clergy and laity was groundless and unscriptural, and that the pope and all other ecclesiastics ought to be nothing more than servants of the church, to teach faith in Christ, and freedom to believers. His own conduct was a clear comment on the book, and gave the sense in the most unsuspecting manner. On the tenth of December, in the same year, he had caused a pile of wood to be

erected without the walls of the city of Wittenburgh, and there in the presence of a prodigious multitude of people of all ranks and orders, he committed to the flames both the bull that had been published against him, and the decretals and canons relating to the pope's supreme jurisdiction.' [Robinson's Ecclesiastical Researches p. 540.] Notwithstanding this bold defence of liberty, and open resistance of ecclesiastical tyranny, Luther did not always respect the liberty of others, nor tolerate that opposition to his opinions which himself had offered, not only to the opinions, but to the authority of the pope and the established laws of the catholic church. His treatment of his colleague Carolstadt, of Muncer, and the German baptists, furnish proof of the inconsistency of his conduct: however Luther was nothing so culpable in this respect as Calvin, for he did not burn those he thought heretics.

Page 288, line 8. *the writings of Servetus.*

Mr. Robinson says, 'What every one believes is, that his books were pirated, printed and reprinted, and so many contradictions have been reported about him and them, that it would be endless to investigate particulars in order to obtain precision.' If his books were pirated and

reprinted without his knowledge, it is not improbable they were, in some instances interpolated; from this source some of the incongruities and obscurities which they are supposed to contain might arise.

Page 294, line 11. *an outcry about irreverence &c.*

It has been very common for the advocates of reputed orthodoxy, instead of candidly examining and attempting a sober refutation of the opinions and arguments of their opponents, to make an outcry about dangerous doctrines, irreverence, heresy and blasphemy, in order to excite prejudice and prevent attention to what they deem erroneous. Their doing this betrays a consciousness that what they wish to maintain will not bear the scrutiny of reason, is incapable of a calm and rational defence, that the warfare in which they are engaged requires other weapons than sober argument, and that their opponents would gain ground in the field of controversy were they not to prejudice their cause by alarming the feelings of the public.

Page 302, line 2. *give very easily into the contempt of the historical and literal sense.*

This is too much the case to the present day. With some christians the literal sense of scripture is esteemed poor and dry, the mere shell and covering of what they call its spiritual meaning. Such men are fond of calling the scriptures, even the New Testament, the mere letter, and the dead letter; forgetting that Jesus said *the words which I speak unto you they are spirit, and they are life*, that Paul declares the gospel to be *the power of God unto salvation, to every one that believeth*, and that it is the ministration of the spirit and of righteousness. The absurd method of spiritualizing the scriptures has greatly obscured their meaning, rendered it uncertain, and made way for the most fanciful and ridiculous interpretations. The calling the gospel a dead letter implies a denial of its saving efficacy, weakens its authority, and tends to bring the sacred writings into contempt, for nothing can be a dead letter but a writing that is become obsolete and ceases to operate with the force of a law. When once the spiritualizing plan is adopted, every man is at liberty to give such a sense of scripture as may suit his fancy, and the more unnatural and

extravagant it is, the more sublime many will think it. In this way the words of scripture may be made to mean any thing, and be perverted to any purpose. If once we depart from the obvious sense which the language of the sacred penman conveys, we find ourselves in a labyrinth, without any guide but either our own imagination, or that of some other person equally fallible. The real sense of the letter of scripture is undoubtedly the sense the writers meant to convey; consequently, to what ever else the language may bear to be accomodated, that is the only true sense. To give to the words of the sacred penman a different sense to what they meant to convey, is to give our own meaning, not theirs.

Page 302, line 4. *the knowledge of the Hebrew.*

Those who have neither leisure nor the means of acquiring a knowledge of the hebrew language, ought to pay close attention to the style and manner of the prophets, before they attempt to judge of the sense of the prophecies. They wrote in the highly figurative and glowing style of the eastern world, and if their language be construed according to the cold and unfigurative style of the west their meaning will be sure to be mistaken. Every where in their writings

we meet with bold metaphors, lofty flights, sudden transitions, personifications, apostrophes, &c. To understand them we must endeavor to look through the imagery in which their descriptions are dressed.

Page 302, line 10. *the study of the jewish history.*

This is essentially necessary to a right understanding of the prophets. They had the state, concerns, and interests, of their own nation continually before them. They wrote for the information and improvement of their own countrymen. Consequently, the prophecies in the Old Testament should be considered as intimately connected with the jewish history, and *that* history regarded as in general their best exposition. The events which the prophets foretold were such as the Jews would be interested in, and as had some connexion with and bearing upon their previous history. The prophecies were delivered in consequence of the existing state of the people at the time, were intended to operate on their hopes and fears, to instruct, reprove, comfort and direct them. In attending to the prophets we should keep the Jews and their history continually in view, and look for the accomplishment, at least, of most of the pre-



dictions in the dispensations of God towards that people, the events which have befallen or shall hereafter befall them, now are, or shall at some future time be connected. On the strictest examination it will be found, that the prophets always had in view the things which concerned their own nation, and that other matters are brought in incidentally, and chiefly as they had some bearing on the former.

Page 317, line 17. *had he not been prevented by an untimely death.*

Bigots and persecutors, of all descriptions, are the enemies of science and improvement.—How many men of genius, the friends of literature and science, were immolated in France, during the triumph of jacobinical fury, when political bigotry and infidel fanaticism proscribed without discrimination the learned and the ignorant, who were suspected of disaffection to the monsters, who, availing themselves of circumstances, had the address to get themselves placed at the head of affairs in that nation. Learning, piety, patriotism, wealth, beauty, all became the victims of their blind and merciless rage.—Even one of the greatest chemists that ever lived, their fury would not spare to finish an experiment.

Page 337, line 27. *the Lutheran notion of justification.*

Oecolampadius called Servetus impudent for saying the Lutherans did not understand justification. It seems it was not an impudent thing for Luther and his associates to condemn some of the doctrines of the church of Rome, to violate their allegiance to the pope, and to say that he, his cardinals, and the whole romish priesthood, did not understand the doctrine of justification; but for Servetus, who owed no allegiance to the Lutherans, to say *they* did not understand that doctrine was a very impudent thing! But how was it more impudent for him to charge them with ignorance than it was for them to charge him, not only with ignorance, but with blasphemy also? They thought themselves under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, that made the difference: hence it was an impudent thing for him to contradict them! But the council of Trent also professed to be guided by the Holy Spirit; yet they resisted its decisions. There is no reasoning with men who will have it that the spirit of God is their prompter.

Page 372, line 5. *erected on the same basis new fabrics, not much dissimilar, in some of their component parts, to the old.*

The reformed churches were erected on the same basis as the church of Rome. Like it, they were established by worldly power and authority; their constitution was regulated by human laws; an assent to human creeds and articles of faith, and a conformity to the ordinances of men, were made the terms of communion with them. They were a kind of worldly kingdoms, unlike that which Christ described when he said, *my kingdom is not of this world*. In some leading doctrines, such as that of the trinity, of original sin, infant baptism, and that worst of all popish principles, the right of coercing conscience, they continued in unison with the church of Rome. In some instances, while the pope was abjured, popery was continued under a new name, by the transfer of a considerable portion of his authority to other hands, and the substituting another in his place as head of the church. Laws of synods and other assemblies succeeded to those of the vatican, and a consistory did, in some degree, what popish ecclesiastical courts had done before. Not only in some of their leading principles, in their organization, their discipline, their ceremonies, their formularies, the reformed churches, in many particulars,

resembled that of Rome. These things furnished as strong grounds of dissent from them, as they had, with their views, for a dissent from their popish brethren.

Page 372, line 10. *false notions of what were deemed the fundamentals of religion.*

It is impossible to free men from superstition and its dreadful consequences until they are enlightened by divine truth; so long as they cling to error, its baneful effects will remain. Hence the first object of a reformer should be to enlighten the minds of those he would reform. In doing this, it will ever be necessary to advert to first principles. Mistakes respecting the fundamentals of religion generally lead to false notions of the system at large. All the evils which exist among men originate in an erroneous judgment. Paul asserts, that the Gentiles were alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that was in them: (Ephe. 4: 18.) that when they became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish hearts were darkened, they fell into the grossest abominations: (Rom. Chap 1.) that he was sent to deliver them out of this state by enlightening their minds. Acts 26: 18. Every important change in the moral and religious state of mankind must commence in the diffusion of right ideas. Set them right as to the

first principles of christianity, and they will the more easily detect their mistakes on particular points of doctrine and practice.

Page 373, line 2. *Luther, Calvin, and others dwelt secure under the shadow of human laws, &c.*

Had not the reformation been countenanced and supported by the civil power, in those nations where it obtained footing, it would no doubt have been crushed, as it was in some places where for a time it gained some little ground. Had it not been for the patronage of princes and states, what had been the fate of Luther, Calvin, and the rest of the reformers? They would most probably have been burnt alive. The protestant churches could not have existed without the protection of the civil government. It was a wise and righteous policy that led several of the powers of Europe to countenance the reformation, and protect the reformers from persecution. Had they stopped there they had done well; but when they enacted proscribing laws, and drew the sword of persecution against those whom the party they espoused denounced as heretics; when they took upon themselves to limit the progress of reformation, and new model religion by human authority, they acted materially wrong: after putting the scriptures into the hands of the people, and declaring conscience

free, they should have left reformation to work its own way, only taking care that no party of christians were suffered to persecute others. While the other reformers succeeded, Servetus was crushed, because he had no powerful patron to protect him.

Page 373, line 24. *the press.*

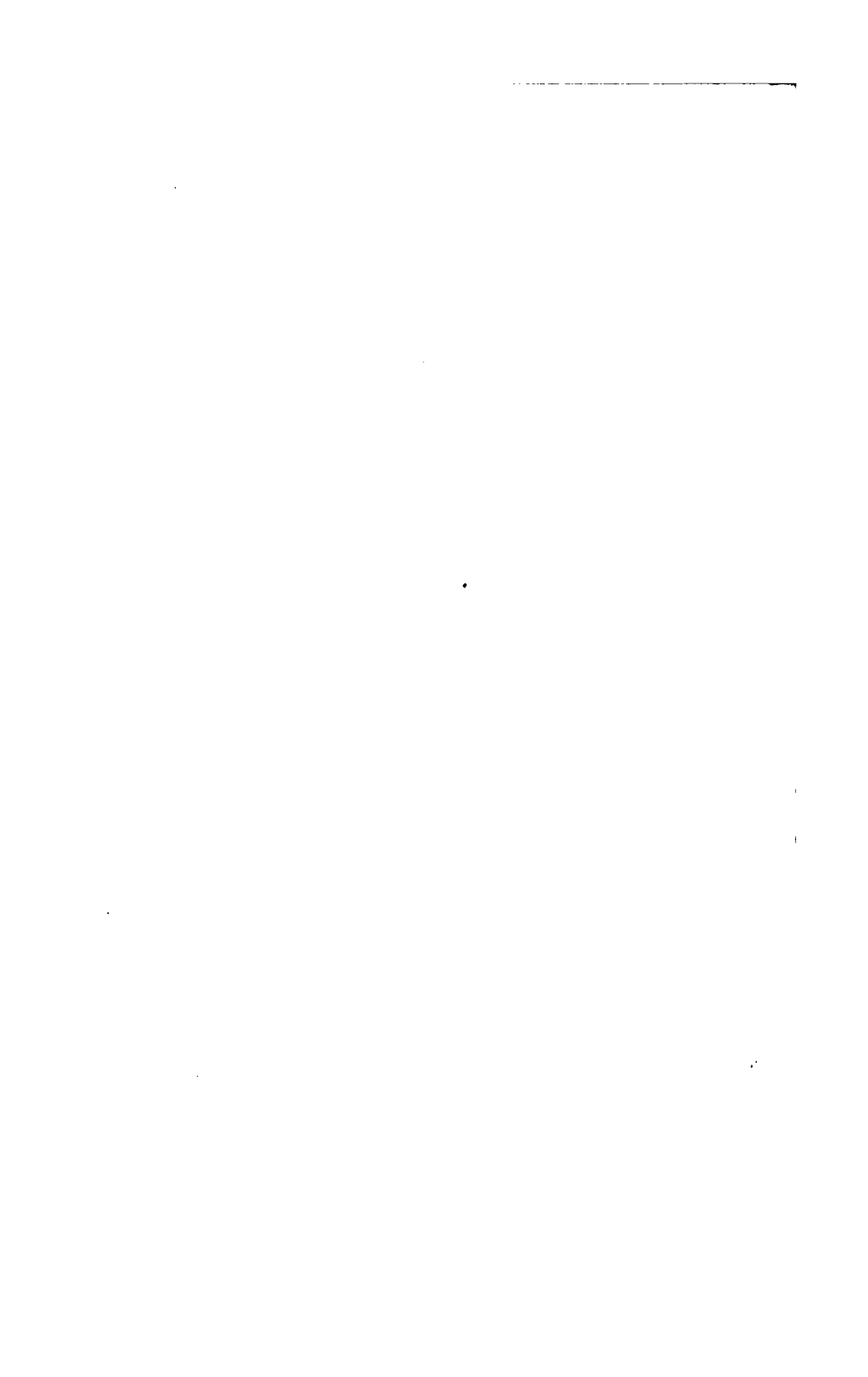
Of all the discoveries made in the arts, in these latter times, that of printing seems to be the most important. Through the medium of the press, information may be communicated to a much greater extent, and at a cheaper rate, than it could by any other means: nor is it easy to stop the progress of information, once put into general circulation through this medium. A free press may well be the terror of oppressors, bigots and persecutors, and the proudest boast of Britons; for it is the most powerful engine that can be employed to counteract the nefarious designs of the former, and is the bulwark of the liberties of the latter. Where the press is free, it is not possible mankind should be kept long in ignorance. Next to trial by jury, the liberty of the press should be esteemed the most valuable of our privileges, as Englishmen.

Page 381, line 14. *feel indignant at the conduct of Calvin.*

Who can contemplate such a scene of perse-

cution promoted by him, and feel otherwise? And, as if not satisfied with the destruction of his opponent, he endeavors to fix a lasting stigma on his name. In the confession of faith drawn up by Calvin for the church at Geneva is the following article. 'We detest all the heresies which have anciently disturbed the churches, and especially the diabolical imaginations of Servetus, who attributes to the Lord Jesus a fantastical divinity; &c. And in his theological tracts, there is a confession of faith, which all the students of the public school of Geneva are to make before the rector, in which is the following article. 'Although God is one simple essence, yet there is in him three distinct persons; wherefore I detest all the heresies condemned by the first council of Nice, as likewise those condemned in the councils of Ephesus and Calcedon; together with those errors that have been revived by Servetus and his followers.' Yet Calvin could call the word trinity unscriptural and barbarous, and feel offended at being called a trinitarian! Whether the above barbarous confessions be still in use at Geneva, or how long they have been laid aside, I have not learned.

Reader rejoice that thy lot is cast in a more enlightened and liberal age, learn to value the liberty thou enjoyest, and diligently improve thy privileges.





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